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Security Council

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Monday, 4 December 2006, 11.35 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Russian Federation	Mr. Rogachev
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

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06-63968 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Canada, Colombia, Finland, Israel, Lebanon, Myanmar and Norway, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Egeland to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jan Egeland. Before giving him the floor, I wish to note that this is Mr. Egeland's last appearance in the Security Council in his capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. On behalf of the members, I wish to extend our thanks and gratitude to Mr. Egeland for his dedicated efforts in addressing humanitarian concerns, as well as in bringing humanitarian issues to the attention of the international community. We understand that upon his departure, he will not immediately take up any challenging tasks, but will take some well deserved rest instead. We hope he will be able to implement that plan. In bidding him farewell, we wish him success and fulfilment in his future endeavours.

I now give the floor to Mr. Egeland.

Mr. Egeland: It is very good to be back one last time in this capacity. Over the past three years, I have been encouraged to see that concern for the protection of civilians has steadily gained prominence in the Security Council's deliberations and has been reflected in United Nations humanitarian and peace operations. When fighting takes place predominantly amidst the civilian population, or is waged directly against them, and when the main consequential losses are sustained by civilians, then it is imperative that the safety, security and well-being of civilians be at the heart of our approach to international security and crisis management. The real measure of our United Nations success will be judged by the extent to which our actions have made a difference in securing the protection, the rights and the freedoms of the civilian population.

Last year, as Members of the United Nations, Council members solemnly pledged to accept the responsibility to protect civilian populations. We are, sadly, still far away from seeing that responsibility translate into predictable and adequate action to provide protection for all beleaguered and threatened communities irrespective of time, place and circumstance. That responsibility to protect must be depoliticized, become a truly shared interest and translate into joint action by all members of the Council and by our global Organization. Thereby, members will live up to the expectations of tens of millions of vulnerable men, women and children for a United Nations that is united.

I have seen during my tenure as Emergency Relief Coordinator that we have succeeded in providing security when in the end there was united action taken by all members. We are seeing vast progress in Liberia, in Sierra Leone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in South Sudan thanks to that. We have not had the same unity of purpose or action in Darfur or in Gaza. Our readiness to act, to

sanction and to fund must be the same in Uganda, in Chad or Côte d'Ivoire as it is in Afghanistan, Kosovo or Iraq. Our responsibility to protect must transcend singular interests and become a core principle of humanity across all civilizations. That is why this regular thematic debate on the protection of civilians matters so much. When the lives and safety of civilians are at stake, regardless of where, neither strategic nor economic or other political interests should deter members from acting swiftly upon their united responsibility to protect.

Since my briefing to the Council in December 2003 (see S/PV.4877) — my first such briefing — we have witnessed a steady decline in the number of conflicts. Recent analysis indicates that the number of conflicts has indeed declined by 40 per cent since 1989, yet we have been far less successful in affecting the conduct of hostilities and in altering the impact of conflict. Parties to conflict have increasingly demonstrated a wilful disregard for the basic tenets of international humanitarian law. In fact, civilians have become the primary object of violence more frequently than in the past. Evidence indicates that violent attacks against non-combatants increased by 55 per cent between 1989 and 2005, with the most significant increase occurring in the last five years.

The reasons for that are many. The proliferation of non-State and informal armed groups and their supply of ever more sophisticated weaponry and equipment is one reason. Another one is the intentional, reckless and often disproportionate use of military weaponry and tactics with little or no regard for their impact on the civilian population.

For example, the Iraqi population wakes up every morning to a staggering number of civilians who have been executed, maimed and tortured by sectarian militias cleansing entire neighbourhoods and areas of men, women and children belonging to the "wrong" religious or ethnic group. More than 100 civilians a day, an estimated 30,000 since May 2006 alone, have been killed. Nowhere in the world do more civilians die right now from violence directed against them than in Iraq.

In Gaza, since September, Israel has launched some 15,000 artillery shells, mostly into densely populated areas, killing civilians and children and destroying essential infrastructure. Palestinian militants have launched some 1,700 devices into Israel with no attempt to distinguish between combatants and Israeli civilians. Suicide bombings aimed at causing maximum casualties and terror among civilians have become a regular feature of violence in too many conflicts.

And then there is the use of indiscriminate weapons. In August, I voiced my outrage at the unacceptably large number of cluster bomb strikes in southern Lebanon. The use of cluster munitions, by anyone, anywhere in the world, is, in my view, immoral. Just like landmines, they continue to kill and maim even after the conflict has ended. The victims are children at play or adults trying to rebuild their communities out of the rubble. In southern Lebanon alone, we have more than a million unexploded bomblets that lie hidden in fields, olive groves, and gardens, causing one of the biggest impediments to a speedy return of the displaced and to the rapid reconstruction of homes and livelihoods. Pending their eventual prohibition, I urge Council members to support a moratorium on the use of cluster munitions, a weapon which belongs in the garbage cans of history along with landmines.

In reviewing my seven briefings on the protection of civilians to the Council, you will find that the key concerns are still the same as those listed in my original ten-point action plan. They have been the recurrent themes of all my country-specific briefings to the Security Council over the past three and a half years.

The first pillar of my 2003 commitments was to work with the Council to improve humanitarian access to those most in need of protection and assistance. At that time, we at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that access was constrained or obstructed for more than 10 million people in some 20 conflict-affected countries. There have since been definite improvements, most notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, northern Uganda and southern Sudan. We have seen that concerted efforts by States, peacekeepers and humanitarian organizations can deliver positive change and sustained access.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the country with the largest war-affected population, humanitarian organizations and peacekeepers have established a common access and protection strategy based on their distinct and

complementary roles. Access and protection have improved, as peacekeepers prioritize those locations where security has most constrained humanitarian operations. However, such actions have clear resource implications for peacekeeping operations and require the Security Council to consider force composition as well as resource requirements, if peacekeeping missions are to fulfil this important element of their mandate.

Despite such improvements, however, serious obstacles to access persist in many countries. Arbitrary arrest and detention, verbal and physical abuse, and bureaucratic impediments continue to be used by authorities around the world to restrict our access to populations in need.

The most brutal means of denying access is the deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers. The murder of 17 Action Contre La Faim (ACF) workers in Sri Lanka on 5 August was a vicious reminder of this fact. The targeted abduction and murder of aid workers in Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq have effectively cut off many of the neediest civilians from our assistance.

Individual incidents such as these are shocking, and the overall trends are even more alarming. In 1997, 39 humanitarian workers were killed. By 2005, this number had risen to an annual toll of 61. The number of violent incidents involving humanitarian workers more than doubled in the same period, with the most attacks occurring in the Sudan and Somalia. It is the national staff of humanitarian organizations that face the greatest risks. Members of the media, acting as the world's witnesses to atrocities and humanitarian needs, alerting all of us to our responsibilities, have also been increasingly subject to attack. In Iraq alone, 26 journalists have been killed this year.

Attacks on humanitarian personnel have a terrible impact on our ability to sustain humanitarian operations. I urge the Security Council to address more systematically the deliberate targeting of our humanitarian and associated staff. These acts must be unanimously condemned by the Council and the perpetrators held to account.

My second long-term concern is protection and assistance for internally displaced persons. Large-scale internal displacement continues to be one of the principal characteristics of conflict. While the global refugee population has dropped by 20 per cent over the past three years, the number of internally displaced persons declined only by a modest six percent in 2005, despite resolution of long-standing conflicts and significant return movements. And we have seen the numbers increase again over the past several months, with waves of new displacement in many countries.

Since 2004, I have repeatedly briefed the Security Council on my missions to Darfur, where direct targeting of civilians has led to repeated cycles of displacement. People have now been displaced multiple times as the victims of shifting conflict and restrictions on humanitarian access. Just last October, fighting in Sri Lanka led to 1,000 families being displaced for the fourth time from the northern part of the Batticalca district when humanitarian access was suspended.

States bear the direct responsibility for the protection of all civilians, including internally displaced persons, and must be held to their obligations. In at least 12 countries, six million internally displaced people receive no assistance or protection from their Governments. The humanitarian community has squarely taken on the long-standing challenge of internal displacement through our humanitarian reform agenda.

We now have more predictable operational leadership for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons, established through the so-called cluster process or through humanitarian partnerships of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations with Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. The establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund is also a significant advance and makes headway towards ensuring a predictable and effective response to acute protection needs. While those developments will go some way towards improving protection and assistance on the ground, they cannot replace the responsibility of States.

The third concern is sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence are not simply an unfortunate consequence of conflict; increasingly, they are a deliberate and devastating weapon against individuals as well as targeted communities. Despite recent ground-breaking International Criminal Court indictments for the use of rape as a war crime, sexual violence continues unchecked and unchallenged.

I am outraged at our almost complete inability to address this scourge. And I am deeply disturbed that we have not taken more decisive action to prevent it, as

well as respond to it, through our political and humanitarian means. In Darfur, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported an explosive increase in sexual assaults this summer. Over a five-week period, more than 200 women were attacked around Kalma camp alone. Senior Government officials in the Sudan continue to deny that such acts occur, and they have yet to take any serious action. While this persists, those who rape will continue to enjoy more freedom of movement than those living in the camps.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 25,000 cases of rape were reported last year, with thousands more occurring this year and countless others unknown. Targeted violence on that scale requires much more effective and concerted action by the Security Council. Resolution 1325 (2000) gave us clear standards for the specific protection of women in conflict, but we must now require stronger reporting, full compliance and legal recourse.

In Goma, there have been 10 prosecutions for sexual violence. That has already had some effect. Women victims, no longer branded as deviants, are now seen as survivors of an atrocious crime. With the stigma broken, more women are seeking assistance. When I met presidential candidate Kabila earlier this year, I asked that military, political and administrative leaders be tried and held accountable for rape committed on their watch. Mr. Kabila then agreed to do so if elected. We now need him and other leaders of conflict-ridden countries to live up to their responsibilities.

I ask the Council to consider the pervasive nature of sexual violence when reviewing peacekeeping mandates as well, to ensure that force composition includes dedicated female policing units and that adequate support is provided for response and prosecution where required.

Over the past three years, we have seen, at long last, modest progress being made on the issue of children associated with fighting forces. The numbers have declined some 20 per cent, with an estimated 250,000 children still being exploited as soldiers, cooks and spies and for sexual purposes. Progress has been due mainly to the large-scale demobilization of children in West Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, even though we continue to see active recruitment in many countries. Long-term support for reintegration is critical in order to protect children from recruitment or re-recruitment.

After my most recent mission to Uganda, I remain very concerned about the conditions of children held by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I welcome the recent presidential statement from the Council (S/PRST/2006/45) calling upon the LRA to immediately release all children, women and non-combatants. The situation in Sri Lanka is also particularly disturbing, with repeated reports of continuing recruitment. I hope that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam will honour its commitment to release all children from its ranks by 1 January.

I would now like to turn to a number of trends and reflect on how we can improve the protection of civilians under three distinct categories: countries emerging from conflict, those where conflict is deeply entrenched and those where the effect of conflict and violence against civilians must be addressed before it takes root.

In countries emerging from conflict, such as Angola, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Southern Sudan, protection concerns remain, even though emergency relief may no longer be our most pressing priority. In such situations, the Council must recognize that protection needs relate more specifically to issues of reconciliation, transitional justice and land or property rights. The inequalities and perceived injustices that stem from violations of human rights, if left to fester, will challenge sustainable peace and security.

Missions need to be properly resourced in their final phases, and protection-of-civilians indicators need to be used to better define those resources. Otherwise, where mandates are short-sighted and the foundations of stable recovery are deeply flawed, we will find ourselves repeatedly returning to unfinished work, as we have now done for the fifth time in Haiti.

My second category includes those many countries that face widespread and chronic protection crises resulting from repeated cycles of violence. We must now recognize that the conflict related to the Middle East crisis has become so deeply entrenched that it has created one of the world's most serious protection crises. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are at least 1.2 million refugees from Iraq living in neighbouring countries, with unconfirmed figures

indicating that 40,000 to 60,000 people a month are crossing into Syria seeking refuge, with totally inadequate support. The worst aspects of the protection crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories are reflected in the deaths of more than 110 children under the age of 17 this year — more than twice the number of deaths in 2005.

The complex nature of those conflicts and the use of terror seriously challenge our capability to ensure the protection of civilians. But that should not deter members from challenging the disproportionate use of force, attacks against protected civilian installations and restrictions on humanitarian access and operations, whenever they occur.

During my tenure as Emergency Relief Coordinator, I have repeatedly come before the Council to highlight the neglected protection concerns in Somalia. More than 400,000 Somalis live in deplorable conditions after having endured multiple displacements, years of drought and, now, massive flooding. The rising tension between the Islamic Courts and neighbouring forces may lead to even more catastrophic conflict. With improvements in security in some parts of the country, I am concerned that the United Nations policy of non-engagement with the Islamic Courts will bind the hands and feet of the humanitarian agencies, preventing us from meeting our humanitarian mandate to provide assistance to those most in need, wherever they are.

In Darfur, I deeply regret that, despite one of the largest humanitarian operations in the world and massive, sustained advocacy, civilians continue to be subjected to rape, murder and repeated forced displacement. The number of displaced persons has doubled since 2004, and an unprecedented two thirds of the population is now in need of emergency assistance.

In Uganda, systematic advocacy and the concerted attention of the Council have begun to bear fruit, as the current fragile dialogue with the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army have led to the first prolonged cessation of hostilities this decade.

Thirdly, let me just mention the countries that must concern us because they are the ones where we see the re-emergence of concern for the protection of civilians. I have already expressed my concerns about the serious threat to civilian protection in Sri Lanka. Myanmar now has a displaced population of over half a million people to whom humanitarian access is severely restricted, and the situation remains of serious concern. I would like to stress the importance of the continued dialogue with the authorities of Myanmar under the Secretary-General's good-offices mandate. I hope that those discussions will yield tangible results in the near future.

In conclusion, the opportunities to strengthen the protection of civilians lie in the hands of the Council. I urge members to firmly exploit the opportunities and use the tools at their disposal. I will leave the Council with five issues as future priorities.

First, I urge the Council to remain committed to regular thematic briefings and debriefings following the field missions of my successors, briefings by my colleagues, and consultations with non-governmental organizations under the Arria formula. That will equip the Council with the best information available to facilitate its decisions. My Office remains committed to establishing effective monitoring systems to assist the Council. We will be able to provide a systematic analysis of protection trends, and we are establishing a comprehensive information management system for the protection of civilians.

Secondly, the Security Council must make more effective use of the mechanisms at its disposal to prevent violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law. Targeted sanctions can be used more effectively to support the creation of a more secure environment for the civilian population by sending a clear message to the perpetrators that such violations are unacceptable.

Thirdly, conflict mediation and the timely and effective use of good offices constitute a critical tool at our disposal, which we must engage at the earliest opportunity. International protection, whether by peacekeepers or humanitarians, can be only an interim response. Civilians will continue to suffer until protection is complemented by conflict prevention, conflict resolution and political solutions. It is important to ensure that humanitarian negotiation and mediation skills continue to be actively deployed even in the seemingly most intransigent environments. I welcome the efforts that have been taken to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Political Affairs, as well as the introduction of the Peacemaker Initiative. Our close cooperation with that Initiative will be key to

ensuring that protection concerns are adequately reflected in peace processes and mediation initiatives.

Fourthly, there is a need for comprehensive, predictable funding. The establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund is a significant advance, and will help us to make headway towards ensuring a predictable humanitarian response to acute protection crises. However, the impact of more predictable humanitarian funding will be limited if there is insufficient funding for peace mediation, peacebuilding or peacekeeping operations to address their mandated protection responsibilities. I urge the Council to ensure that appropriate and adequate resources are available to peacekeeping missions that enable missions to discharge their responsibilities for the protection of civilians in all phases of a mission's mandate.

My final concern is to ensure that sufficient guidance and support are provided for peacekeeping operations. My Office is working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to develop preliminary guidance, and efforts are also under way to work with regional organizations to better define their role in the protection of civilians. It is important to expand our notions of the protection role that peacekeeping operations can play, not only through the provision of physical protection, but through supporting civil order, the restoration of judicial systems and the strengthening of the rule of law. We must also ensure, along with our colleagues in peacekeeping and political affairs, that we are able to develop and draw on the skills of regional organizations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Council for their attention to these issues of grave and mutual concern today and throughout the duration of my tenure as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. In times of difficulty for humanitarian access overall, my access to the Council has always been impeccable. Together, we can make a continued positive difference. We cannot afford to fail.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Egeland for his very important briefing. Once again, I wish him every success for the future.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members in prior consultations, I remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts of their statements in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like at the outset to thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his briefing. I would also like to thank him for the efforts that he has made over the past three years in the area of humanitarian assistance. We wish him every success. I also wish to commend United Nations agencies for their significant efforts in the field of protecting civilians in armed conflict over the years.

The issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict is an old one. International humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and its two Additional Protocols of 1977, sets out adequate provisions in this regard. While the provisions of international humanitarian law have been widely accepted, many challenges remain in their implementation. We are deeply concerned about the fact that the lives and property of civilians are threatened in armed conflict. We urge the relevant parties to armed conflicts to abide by international humanitarian law, provide adequate protection to civilians and avoid threatening their lives and damaging their property.

The important Security Council resolution 1674 (2006), adopted in April, which sets out comprehensive provisions pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and a number of other relevant resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the Council on previous occasions, have established a legal framework for the work of the Council on this issue. What is needed now is the effective implementation of those documents in order to improve the situation on the ground. In that context, I would like to highlight the following points.

First, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, the responsibility to protect civilians lies primarily with the Governments of the countries concerned. While the international community and other external parties can provide support and assistance and urge the parties concerned seriously to implement the provisions of humanitarian law and to avoid harming civilians, they should not infringe upon the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of the countries concerned, nor should they enforce intervention by circumventing the Governments of such countries.

Secondly, it is imperative clearly to differentiate between the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian assistance. The efforts made by humanitarian agencies in the spirit of humanitarianism to provide assistance to civilians affected by armed conflict, often under dangerous circumstances, should be appreciated and commended. However, they should also at all times abide by the principles of impartiality, neutrality, objectivity and independence, in order to maintain the humanitarian nature of their operation and to avoid getting involved in local political disputes or negatively affecting a peace process.

Thirdly, to protect civilians, greater emphasis should be placed on prevention as well as on the need to address both the symptoms and the root causes of a conflict. If the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of world peace and security, can effectively prevent and resolve various conflicts, that would successfully provide the best protection possible to civilians. A number of incidents that occurred this year have demonstrated that failure effectively to respond to the outbreak of conflict will render any ex-post-facto protective measures, however ingenious, virtually ineffectual vis-à-vis the sudden onslaught of violence and conflict. The best way to protect civilians is to provide them with safe and predictable living environments by actively exploring ways of preventing conflicts and effectively resolving ongoing conflicts.

In discussing the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the Security Council should continue to approach with caution the concept of the responsibility to protect. The World Summit Outcome last year gave an extensive and very cautious representation of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and went on to request the General Assembly to continue to explore this concept. As many Member States have expressed their concern and misgivings in that regard, we believe that it is not appropriate to expand, wilfully interpret or even abuse this concept. Resolution 1674 (2006) only reaffirmed in principle the relevant statement as contained in the Summit Outcome, without any further elaboration. All sides should continue to abide by the relevant agreed elements of the Summit Outcome in interpreting or applying this concept. In that context, the Security Council cannot and should not take over the role of the General Assembly or make any prejudgment.

Finally, we hope that in the process of implementing the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, full consideration will be taken of the specific characteristics and circumstances of each conflict, so as to adopt appropriate measures aimed at effectively achieving the objective of protecting civilians.

Ms. Wolcott Sanders (United States of America): We wish at the outset to thank Mr. Egeland for his report.

In April this year, the Council adopted a resolution recognizing the threats faced by civilians in armed conflict and condemning all acts of violence and human rights abuses committed against unarmed and vulnerable populations. Many of the peacekeeping operations mandated by the Council have as part of their mandate the protection of civilians under imminent threat of violence.

Unfortunately, the world continues to be plagued by violent conflicts, and civilians often bear the brunt of such crises. Civilians are now the major category of casualties in conflicts worldwide. Violence against civilians in armed conflict includes rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture, execution, forced conscription — sometimes of children — forced labour, and displacement. The primary responsibility for protecting civilians lies with the parties to a conflict. In such situations of violent conflict, we must do everything appropriate to protect innocent civilians from the impact of armed conflict. In situations where a State is unable or unwilling to protect its civilians, the international community has a distinct role.

We must also continue to focus our efforts on the prevention of conflict itself. To help prevent conflict, we must focus on the critical signs that an unrepresentative and corrupt Government is in place. These include demonstrated disregard for the rule of law, human rights and basic democratic values such as freedom, equality, transparency and free and fair elections. When these conditions exist, political unrest may be festering. We all are aware of countries exhibiting those traits. What we as a Council choose to do about such situations in their earliest stages can make the difference between life and death for countless innocent civilians.

Let me now turn to some specific cases of concern. We continue to be gravely concerned about the ongoing crisis in Darfur and especially the impact of the conflict on civilians in that region. Civilians continue to be directly targeted, more than 2 million remain displaced from their homes, and most have been victims of severe abuses, including sexual violence.

Mr. Egeland's recent briefing to the Council following his mission to the Sudan painted a stark picture of a humanitarian and human rights situation that has not improved and could be on the brink of even larger-scale catastrophe.

In addition, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers have increasingly been facing harassment and intimidation in the Sudan. This continuing insecurity has had a direct and detrimental impact on the international community's ability to deliver assistance and to provide basic services for the victims of the conflict. The situation in Darfur illustrates clearly a situation in which the international community has a role to play in safeguarding civilians in armed conflict, including those who are internally displaced, since traditional means of protection have broken down.

It is also important to reiterate that internally displaced civilians living in camps are not always protected from serious human rights violations. Several other countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, face delicate situations of transition with protection challenges. United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, together with support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), help ensure that civilians in those regions are not denied the dividends of peace.

We are encouraged by the fact that the Security Council has been more consistent in addressing the regional dimensions of civilian protection. Resolution 1674 (2006) and recent mandates have highlighted key issues that affect civilians in armed conflict, including the deliberate targeting of civilians, forced displacement, sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence, the recruitment and use of child soldiers in violation of international law, the need for access by humanitarian personnel to civilians in need of assistance, and the need to promote the safety of United Nations and associated humanitarian personnel.

As we once again reaffirm our commitment to strengthening and reinforcing the protection of civilians in armed conflict, let us ensure that our words and intentions translate into action.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his briefing. As he takes leave of the United Nations, we wish to thank him for his strong and sustained advocacy during his incumbency. We wish him well.

May I also commend you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the issue of the protection of civilians in situations of conflict, which the Secretary-General once rightly described as a humanitarian imperative. This issue is of cardinal importance to the United Nations as a whole, if it is to discharge successfully its Charter obligations of maintaining world peace while promoting sustainable development and strengthening human rights.

Although General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 1991 entrusted Governments and States with the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, parties embroiled in armed conflict are invariably unable to discharge their obligations owing to various inhibiting factors. It is for that reason that the international community, and especially the United Nations, has over the years been at the forefront of this critical humanitarian duty. Indeed, the pivotal role of the United Nations was recognized by world leaders in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome document, and subsequently reaffirmed by resolution 1674 (2006).

We must acknowledge that our Organization, and indeed the Security Council, have, since being seized of the matter, made laudable strides to rein in acts of impunity against unarmed civilians, as demonstrated by the establishment of domestic and international bodies and judicial entities to specifically address the menace. While applauding those measures, we cannot but also stress that recent events in some conflict areas, such as Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are indicative of pertinent gaps that need to be examined, with a view to adopting necessary remedial measures. That requires the total commitment of States to the Secretary-General's call for a culture of protection, through scrupulous adherence to the provisions of all multilateral agreements dealing with the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The changing nature of warfare, be it intra- or inter-State conflict, has of course widened the scope of protection, although its basic elements of physical protection and humanitarian assistance, which are mutually reinforcing, remain unchanged. It has been recognized, that in the new warfare that has emerged, the impact of armed conflict on civilians goes beyond the notion of collateral damage. The physical protection of unarmed civilians in conflict is paramount if an already traumatized populace, especially the vulnerable, like women and children, are to be spared from further agonies of rape and other forms of sexual violence, forced conscription, abduction, forced labour, maiming and forced displacement.

In that connection, the rapid deployment of United Nations peacekeepers in conflict areas is imperative. We recognize that any deployment should be in conformity with the Charter. That notwithstanding, the Security Council has a moral duty to act in dire situations to save civilians not only from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and other grave violations of human rights abuses in line with the commitment made by our leaders last year. It is also our view that the same sentiments underpin article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. We should stop paying lip service to the concept of the responsibility to protect, and have the political will to stand by the courage of our convictions.

Apart from bringing succour and hope to a traumatized population, the presence of peacekeepers also facilitates the provision of humanitarian assistance to hitherto inaccessible areas, especially remote villages and towns. However, without the requisite mandate, the presence of Blue Helmets may not attain the envisaged objective. That is why we welcome the Security Council's resolve to provide peacekeepers with a robust mandate to enable them effectively to discharge their responsibilities. Furthermore, we support extending the role of peacekeepers, where appropriate, to include the protection of civilians and other humanitarian assistance, as well as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

The United Nations system, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, has acquitted itself creditably over the years in providing deprived persons with the basic necessities of life, including food, water, shelter and medical care. Their commendable efforts, often under severe circumstances, have saved hundreds of thousands of lives and led to the improvement in the living conditions of civilians afflicted by the ravages of conflict. Undoubtedly, those noble efforts are often obstructed deliberately by parties to conflicts, whose callous acts often disregard the plight inflicted on innocent civilians by their wanton disruption of their peaceful lives. Parties to conflicts, including armed groups, are obliged to guarantee unfettered access to civilian victims of conflict to cater to their basic needs.

It therefore behoves the community of nations, and especially the Security Council, to ensure that those obligations are fully respected by applying realistic and punitive sanctions against identified persons violating the tenets of these instruments, especially the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their protocols, whose universalization is of the utmost importance. We therefore urge States that are not yet parties to take urgent measures towards that end.

The role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance and other United Nations agencies involved in humanitarian activities can only be sustained through the availability of appropriate resources. We therefore urge donor countries and agencies to concretize their commitment through the provision of adequate funding.

The valuable contribution of regional organizations and other inter-governmental institutions in the protection of civilians cannot be overemphasized, given their profound experience and knowledge of the dynamics of a given region. We therefore encourage the further strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations to enhance the provision of humanitarian assistance as appropriate.

Our goal of providing protection to civilian victims in conflict would be bolstered by the arrest and trial of perpetrators of acts of impunity and gross human rights abuses. We are therefore encouraged by some actions recently taken by the International Criminal Court in that direction. We hope that the force of example will serve as a deterrent to unscrupulous adventurists from indulging in such heinous crimes.

While saluting all the men and women engaged in humanitarian activities, we hold the view that the most effective means of protecting civilians is by preventing the eruption of conflicts, as peace and stability are sine

qua non conditions for the pursuit of development and the promotion of human rights.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): First, I would like to join my colleagues in expressing the gratitude of my delegation to Mr. Jan Egeland, for his valuable briefing. I would also like to commend his role and active engagement in promoting and defending the rights and freedoms of civilians in armed conflict throughout his tenure as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

We also thank the Qatari presidency for organizing this important debate as part of the continuing efforts of the international community and the Council to strengthen the protection of civilians — especially the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children — which our leaders pledged to undertake at the 2005 United Nations World Summit, thereby realizing in practice the principle of the responsibility to protect.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit my statement to a few brief comments.

The existing legal provisions regulating the protection of civilians in armed conflict provide a comprehensive framework. However, they must be fully implemented in practice in order to ensure full respect for civilian status and the protection of all civilians. All parties to a conflict, whether State or non-State actors, must fully and strictly comply with the obligations applicable to them under international law, as well as all the relevant documents and resolutions of the Security Council.

In that regard, it is alarming that many countries involved in present-day armed conflict are not parties to Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions. We therefore repeat our appeal and call upon all States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the instruments pertaining to international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Serious gaps also remain in the practical implementation of legal instruments. There is a need for further enhancement in domestic legal systems of the legal framework concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Despite the international community's growing commitment to better address the tragic plight of civilians trapped in situations of armed conflict — including though the adoption of resolution 1674 (2006), which reaffirmed the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity — we have witnessed the ongoing killing of civilians, sexual violence and attacks motivated by ethnic or religious hatred or political confrontation. Unfortunately, as we heard from Mr. Egeland's briefing, the most vulnerable groups, such as children and women, are not excluded. We are still witnessing the killing and maiming of children, rape and other acts of sexual exploitation — which are often used as a weapon of war — abduction, denial of humanitarian access and the use of child soldiers in many conflict situations.

The continually deteriorating situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan — where at least 200,000 people are estimated to have been killed as a result of the conflict between Government forces, allied militias and rebels seeking greater autonomy, and which has experienced an unprecedented forced displacement of about 2 million people, widespread sexual violence and total disrespect for human rights since 2003 — continues to be a cause of our deepest concern. Furthermore, the violence is increasingly spilling over from Darfur into neighbouring regions of the Central African Republic and Chad.

Unfortunately, since the Council's most recent deliberations on that topic in June, the international community has also been saddened by the number of civilian lives claimed by the renewed conflict in southern Lebanon and northern Israel, during which the civilian population, including women and children, faced deliberate missile attacks against towns, and women and children were often used as human shields by militias. The population on both sides continues to be endangered by unexploded ammunition and threatened by rocket attacks.

We are concerned by Mr. Egeland's observation that the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other humanitarian personnel, in their efforts to provide assistance to the civilian population, as well as journalists daily providing the international community with valuable information from conflict regions, also continue to be subject to deliberate attacks and abductions. In that regard, we appeal to all parties to conflicts to respect the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, the 1949 Geneva Conventions

and the Additional Protocols of 1977, including the Additional Protocol I concerning the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict.

We would like to underline that impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity is unacceptable and that national judicial authorities have the primary responsibility to bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice. In situations where the national judicial authorities are not fully capable of addressing the violation of international humanitarian law, Slovakia fully supports the engagement of the international and mixed tribunals, including the International Criminal Court.

In conclusion, let me draw attention to the need for the integration of basic legal and gender training into the training of all armed forces, including peacekeepers, which has been proved to have a clear positive effect on the behaviour, actual conduct of duty, and respect for international humanitarian law and human rights of the troops deployed in conflict situations. That need should be properly addressed in the implementation of any security sector reform plan, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Efforts to prevent deliberate attacks against civilians, sexual violence and the use of child soldiers require the mainstreaming of those issues into security sector and other governance reforms, with the active participation of all stakeholders — Governments, regional and subregional organizations, donors and civil society. In that respect, I would also like to inform the Council that, on Friday, Slovakia, in cooperation with Canada, is organizing the second round table on security sector reform, which will provide us with another opportunity to address that issue in further detail, including the situation of civilians in armed conflict.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his presentation. Seven years after the Council resolved to address the issue of protecting civilians in armed conflict, he is still reporting on that distressing reality.

Like my colleagues who have already spoken, I pay special tribute to Mr. Egeland, who has spoken to the Security Council today for the last time in his capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. Thanks to his work and tenacity, the Council today has a better understanding of the tragic situations in his field of responsibility. His role in raising the international community's awareness of the very serious humanitarian crisis in Darfur has been critical, and we thank him for it.

At this time last year, we found that the resolutions adopted by our Council in 1999 and 2000 did not go far enough and that their implementation left much to be desired. In March, at the initiative of the United Kingdom, the Council adopted the new and ambitious resolution 1674 (2006), whose full implementation we must now ensure. The resolution must be taken into account in the Council's activities, including in the definition and implementation of the mandates of peacekeeping operations. The Council's credibility is at stake therein.

I must stress that the responsibility to protect civilian populations falls first and foremost to the Governments concerned. Wherever populations are threatened, Governments must fully assume their responsibilities to protect them. The international community must ensure above all that they do not shirk those responsibilities. Regional organizations and the United Nations must encourage them and, if necessary, assume their own responsibilities. In a number of situations, such as in Darfur, the United Nations and regional organizations must work closely with one another.

The issue of access to threatened populations is key to protection. It is unacceptable that 10 million people should be deprived of that access. It is also our responsibility to promote access of humanitarian assistance to those populations, and we must therefore be especially attentive to the protection of United Nations humanitarian workers and those affiliated with non-governmental organizations, as provided for in our resolution 1502 (2003). We must also see to the protection of thousands of humanitarian workers.

My country notes that systematic violations of humanitarian law, and particularly indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations and the humanitarian actors seeking to protect them, are becoming increasingly common. Humanitarian space is no longer the sanctuary it should be, and that distresses us.

We also share the Under-Secretary-General's concern with regard to the specific situation of journalists in armed conflict, and we thank him for drawing the Council's attention to that issue. Without

journalists in the field, we will often be ignorant of events. Without information, we cannot protect civilian populations in a timely manner. In 2005, 65 journalists were killed throughout the world; 75 media professionals have already been killed in 2006. Those figures are the highest in 10 years, and we cannot fail to react to them. We feel that the Council must send a very clear message to all parties to conflicts, reminding them of their obligations to prevent any violence against journalists, and of potential investigations and sanctions in their failure to do so. International humanitarian law that protects journalists must be respected. It is in that spirit that Greece and France, together with the United Kingdom, Denmark and Slovakia, plan to submit proposals to the Council. The message of the Council on this subject is expected, and we hope that it will be possible to arrive at a consensus very quickly.

The last point that I wanted to raise was the protection of the most vulnerable parts of the civilian population — women and small girls victims of sexual violence. Children are already a particular issue of attention for the Security Council. When it comes to children, my delegation has invested itself particularly in being vigilant in these matters. As president of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflicts, I have learned a lot from the fertile debates in the Council and the Assembly on this subject. The remarkable work that is being done on the ground by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, by UNICEF and by child protection offices within various non-governmental organizations permits us to hope that progress can be made.

Women, girls and boys are very often victims of internal displacement in and external displacement from the States from which they come. Millions of displaced persons are being provided with a very low level of protection on the ground, if any at all, though now there are more of them than there are of refugees. We need to seriously think about how we can meet their needs, while respecting the Charter. We also wish to reiterate our attachment to the rights of these people and their return to their homes in security and dignity.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for his statement and to align myself with the statement to be made later by the Ambassador of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

The briefing we have just heard demonstrates that the protection of civilians remains a current and compelling concern. All parties to armed conflict must strive to prevent harm to civilians. Parties must comply fully with the requirements of international law on the protection of civilians, especially concerning the bans on physical attack, sexual and gender-based violence, the use of child soldiers and forced displacement. They must ensure that specific measures for the protection of civilians are included in peace agreements. New peacekeeping missions should be given the mandates and the resources they need in order to protect civilians, and peacekeepers must be trained to understand the issues involved.

I have just spoken of a lot of imperatives — a lot of "musts", and rightly so, because it reflects those things which we have no choice but to do.

Like the Under-Secretary-General, the United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the high number of internally displaced persons. A stronger framework is needed to ensure that international humanitarian responses meet their needs. Human suffering does not recognize national boundaries.

We commend those United Nations agencies, peacekeeping troops and non-governmental organizations that provide vital humanitarian assistance, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. We condemn attacks that target them, in the strongest terms. Jan Egeland raised some important points today about the safety and security of such personnel.

I believe there would be advantage in a briefing to the Council on these very issues by the Department of Safety and Security, because impunity cannot be tolerated — not for attacks on humanitarian and United Nations workers, not for attacks on journalists, and not for attacks on civilians. Such acts should be properly investigated and guilty parties must be held accountable. Where States are unable or unwilling to do this, the international community should be prepared to take action. We welcome the developments that have taken place in 2006, with the arrests of individuals accused of terrible crimes, such as Charles Taylor and Thomas Lubanga.

When disasters happen, the world looks to the United Nations and to Jan Egeland to lead the international response. If this response is to continue to be effective, however, the United Nations must

continue to identify and embrace new ways of meeting humanitarian challenges. The United Kingdom commends the groundbreaking work of the Under-Secretary-General in this respect. The Central Emergency Response Fund is an example of a new initiative that has successfully provided an easier way for quickly getting the right aid to the right places in a crisis situation, and doing so immediately. We should build on successful initiatives like this to ensure that we are able to continue to meet the humanitarian needs of the vulnerable in times of crisis.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the impact of armed conflicts on civilians around the world. Over the past year specifically, there have been increased military campaigns against the insurgents in eastern Burma. Civilians, including children, in the conflict areas suffer from the repercussions of these campaigns. We call on the Government of Myanmar — Burma — and other actors to work towards a peaceful resolution to these conflicts. We also call on that Government to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations agencies on this issue.

In the Middle East, the conflict in Gaza has caused unacceptable suffering to civilians. We welcome the recent ceasefire agreement and call on both sides to do all they can to preserve the ceasefire and to extend it to the West Bank.

The United Kingdom recognizes the threat posed to vulnerable civilians by the uncontrolled spread and accumulation of small arms and light weapons. A poorly regulated arms trade allows weapons to flow into the hands of those involved in conflict or human rights abuses. We are committed to taking forward on a legally binding basis, a treaty on the trade in all conventional arms.

I would like to conclude on a more personal note by thanking Jan Egeland for his tireless efforts over the past three years, which I know have involved personal sacrifices to him and his family. He has been an innovative leader of the reform agenda and has frankly served as the moral conscience of this Council and of the United Nations on many occasions. Humanitarian briefings are now a regular feature of our work in the Council. To that, we owe a great deal — a debt — to Jan, and he has our best wishes for the future. Because of the priorities he has set out today, they, as well of the rest of his work, should help guide our ongoing discussions and work on these crucial issues in the future.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I would like to thank Sir, for convening this very important meeting. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Egeland, for his informative briefing. I would like to take this opportunity to express to him our sincere appreciation for his dedication and hard work in addressing all kinds of issues, particularly the suffering of civilians caught in situations of armed conflict.

Greece aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

Only some months ago the Security Council adopted its latest resolution, 1647 (2006), on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, demonstrating its determination to enhance and improve its response to the protection needs of civilians in armed conflict. The resolution also reaffirms the pledge of the world leaders during the World Summit in September last year to protect their own citizens and the citizens of other States if the latter manifestly fail to do so. Today, given the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in many conflict situations, the resolution remains as timely as ever. We believe that this meeting offers a good opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to its full implementation.

In his earlier presentation, Mr. Egeland painted a disturbing picture of protection crises around the world where violence has become deeply entrenched despite the many efforts made by the international community to ensure sustained and coordinated international attention during the post-peacekeeping phase.

We are gravely concerned about that development. Deliberate violent attacks against civilians, unchallenged sexual violence against women and girls, recruitment, trafficking and other forms of exploitation of children, new waves of displacement and violence, abuse of displaced persons and refugees and blatant attacks against humanitarian staff cannot be tolerated and must come to a halt.

To that one should also add the deliberate attacks against journalists and media staff in situations of armed conflict. The number of casualties among that category of civilians has increased considerably during the past years. Such attacks aim at interfering with the free flow and dissemination of information, which is

crucial for the protection of civilians and an important component in every democratic society.

Journalists are entitled to the protection afforded to them by the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law. States and non-State actors should respect that law. For that reason we welcome Mr. Egeland's reference to the safety and security of journalists. With that mind, my country, along with France, Denmark, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, will submit to the Security Council a concrete proposal regarding the protection of journalists in armed conflict.

Preventing protection crises from becoming entrenched is an important element of civilian protection. Prompt and early action is required to prevent such crises. Systematic reporting to the Security Council is important to facilitate and strengthen decision-making and effective response. In that respect we encourage briefings, not only those by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Egeland, but also by the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding her on-the-ground monitoring of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Respect for the principles of the rule of law and international humanitarian law and fighting impunity are essential for civilian protection. States and non-State actors have the obligation to respect international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, and perpetrators should be brought to justice. In that respect, the role of the International Criminal Court and its impact on those committing such atrocities could be crucial, and the international community and the States concerned should fully cooperate with the Court and support its difficult task. National judicial institutions should also be in a position to tackle impunity, and local justice systems should be supported. The Security Council should continue to give attention to rule of law issues, which should be incorporated in the mandates of peacekeeping missions.

The protection of civilians is a complex and difficult issue, given the many challenges involved. However, it is important that today's peacekeeping missions provide protection against violence for civilians trapped in situations of armed conflict. Peacekeeping missions should be in a position to protect innocent civilians and vulnerable populations against physical violence. The creation of secure environments in and around the camps to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and safeguard humanitarian staff should be clearly spelled out in the mandates of the missions. It is also important that the missions ensure that humanitarian principles are upheld.

As Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno said some time ago,

> "however robust United Nations peacekeeping operations military capabilities might be, they alone cannot ensure security in post-conflict environments absent the right political strategy and the political will of the relevant national and international actors." (*S/PV.5225, p. 5*)

We fully agree with his remarks and believe that such political will and leadership are needed to bring a war-torn society together around common agenda and steer the delicate balance between promoting national reconciliation and unity, on the one hand, and accountability for war crimes on the other. Much remains to be done both at the international level and in the field of national institution-building and security sector reform.

If peace and security are to be lasting, many international and national actors have to work together.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): We thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his briefing on the progress made and the challenges that remain in the effort to protect civilians in armed conflict. We commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), headed by Mr. Egeland, for playing an active lead role in moving the agenda of the protection of civilians forward.

I also pay high tribute to all of the humanitarian agencies and international organizations, as well as representatives of non-governmental organization (NGOs) and civil society, who actively contribute to enhancing cooperation in this area. Thanks to their commitment and dedication, there have been a number of significant developments in the area.

We note and welcome some tangible progress made in the past years in establishing the normative standards and instruments for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, such as the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and of Security Council resolution 1674 (2006). They

represent, among others, significant achievements in the arsenal of basic tools to help the international community deal more effectively with the protection of civilians. We must now pay greater attention to their implementation and to translating them into action and behaviour, so we can better assist people and thus make a difference on the ground in the protection and the delivery of needed services.

As noted, we also welcome the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as an important addition in the humanitarian arsenal of tools this year. The strengthened CERF can increase the predictability of funding and the ability of the United Nations agencies to carry out their protection mandate, including assisting civilian populations in forgotten crises, more effectively. Resources in the expanded CERF should be allocated and used so as to maximize the protection of civilians in specific situations.

In the Council's last open debate on the issue, at its 5476th meeting in June 2006, my delegation pointed out that a wide range of actors who are actively involved in the protection of civilians needed a clearer understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities, or a better defined division of labour among them, in order to be effective. In that regard, the Aide Memoire adopted by the Council in 2002 (S/PRST/2002/6, annex) provided a useful tool to assist the Council in formulating a peacekeeping mandate, as a checklist to properly address protection needs. However, as Under-Secretary-General Egeland noted in his statement to the Council in June — and my delegation agrees with his suggestion — the Aide Memoire needs to be reviewed and updated and put to better use.

Related to that, my delegation also suggested that some kind of a model matrix be developed to better define the respective roles and responsibilities of each actor involved in the protection of civilians. Such a matrix could include a time frame in which respective actors would begin and phase out their activities, as the situation allows. I urge Council members to reflect on that and to take appropriate action on the basis of recommendations that we should request the Secretariat to formulate.

That being said, I would like to touch upon three other points noted by Mr. Egeland in his statement and his conclusions which we believe would merit careful consideration by the Council and member States.

First, how much should the Council, as an organ primarily responsible for international peace and security, concern itself with humanitarian-related issues? There has been some debate on that issue, keeping in mind the mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. As a general point, the manner and the extent to which the Security Council has taken up humanitarian-related issues for the past two years is, in the view of my delegation, appropriate, particularly as they relate to the protection of civilians agenda.

We therefore much appreciated receiving briefings provided from time to time by OCHA and by the heads of humanitarian agencies, and in some cases by civil society representatives, on matters of concern to the Council with respect to country-specific situations or thematic issues, such as the humanitarian impact of sanctions measures. On that basis we welcome the open debate today and hope that this practice will be maintained with the same frequency.

In this connection, Security Council resolution 1674 (2006) reaffirms the responsibility to protect populations. In the 2005 Summit Outcome document our leaders expressed preparedness to take collective action through the Council in this matter. Bearing that in mind, the Council needs to further discuss the role it should play in protecting civilians in armed conflict more energetically and in more depth. I have already mentioned as a practical measure the need to update the Aide Memoire and the possibility of developing some kind of model matrix.

Those would be useful first steps, but they are not enough. The Council will need to go further and discuss how it can best ensure conditions necessary for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, in general and in specific situations. In Darfur, for example, a serious gap remains between what the Government is able or willing to provide in terms of humanitarian access and safety of humanitarian personnel, and the real needs on the ground. Because of this crying gap, a countless number of people suffer or perish daily and the crisis intensifies despite the best intentions and efforts of the African Union through the deployment of its Mission in Sudan (AMIS). Additional urgent support to AMIS is essential as the least minimum, pending agreement on transition to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

But in the end, as Under-Secretary-General Egeland noted, international protection, whether by peacekeepers or humanitarians, can be only an interim response — a band-aid, to use his term. Efforts to improve the humanitarian situation cannot be separated from efforts on the political front, namely, securing a durable cessation of hostilities, developing fully the political process and engaging in effective peacekeeping activity. And here, the Council's ability and credibility is truly being tested.

Second, in terms of action that Member States will need to take, we agree that the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) needs to be addressed as a matter of high priority. We fully support the recommendation made in the report of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, "Delivering as One" (A/61/583), that the humanitarian agencies should clarify their mandates and enhance their cooperation on IDPs. We need to explore this further in various forums, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Executive Committees of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies.

Another issue of high priority related to the protection of civilians is conventional weapons such as small arms and anti-personnel mines. The widespread availability of small arms causes a large number of civilian casualties and gives rise to connected problems such as child soldiers and insecurity in communities. This year, too, Japan, South Africa and Colombia co-sponsored a draft resolution in the General Assembly on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects in order to contribute to raising awareness on the subject. Japan, along with other Member States, will continue to work on this priority through the provision of assistance to affected countries such as Afghanistan. We urge all Member States to ratify the Ottawa Convention.

Likewise, we are concerned about the humanitarian toll that unexploded cluster bombs can cause. Given that there is no legally binding international instrument to ban and regulate their production and use, the international community needs to give urgent attention to this terrible problem.

Third, we stress the importance of strengthening dialogue with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including through Arria-formula meetings. The recent Security Council mission to Afghanistan met with local and international NGO representatives for useful exchanges of views and sharing of information. We welcome the dialogue with NGOs and civil society members at the workshop in Côte d'Ivoire. We encourage OCHA to continue to strengthen interaction with NGOs on the protection of civilians through holding workshops in the field and other possible ways.

I will also mention that Japan welcomes the introduction of a draft resolution by France and other European countries with a focus on the protection of journalists from violence in conflict situations. We look forward to participating actively in the discussion of that proposal, and we hope that the Council can act on it expeditiously.

Lastly, since this is the last time that Under-Secretary-General Egeland briefs the Council before he leaves office, we wish to pay him a high tribute for all his valuable work and many important achievements during his tenure as head of OCHA and Emergency Relief Coordinator. For the past three and a half years, he presided over humanitarian coordination, which I know is no easy job, with great dedication and distinction in a number of crisis situations, including the Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquake in Pakistan, in Darfur, Uganda, and so on. We all agree that in his service to the United Nations he greatly succeeded in raising the profile of the humanitarian cause in the eyes of the international community, for which he should be congratulated. The Government of Japan thanks him for all his efforts, and wishes him well in whatever he will do after he leaves the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There is still a large number of speakers on my list. With the consent of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting until 3.15 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5577 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5577th meeting

Monday, 4 December 2006, 3.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Ainchil
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Vandeville
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Greece	Ms. Filippidou
	Japan	Mr. Takase
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Johansen
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Ohlson

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

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06-64061 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.25 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As I indicated at the morning session, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver condensed versions of their speeches when speaking in the Chamber.

Mr. Ainchil (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. At the same time, we thank the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, for his briefing to the Council. We also especially wish to express our appreciation Mr. Egeland's excellent work leading the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in challenging times for the humanitarian community. His commitment and devotion have made a difference in the life of populations affected by humanitarian emergencies, vulnerable groups and displaced populations.

The situation described by the Emergency Relief Coordinator clearly shows the persistence of atrocities committed against civilians on a scale that goes beyond the statistical fact of the increase or the decrease of certain categories of violence or attacks.

My delegation strongly condemns these attacks and would like to reiterate that no national security consideration can prevail over the primary obligation of all States and parties to a conflict to fulfil the rules of international humanitarian law as contained in the Hague Conventions and the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols.

The Security Council has substantially contributed to the international regime of protection of civilians through its resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000) and 1674 (2006). At the same time, the Council has been given a clear mandate by the General Assembly to take collective action in a timely and decisive fashion to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The previously mentioned legal framework places at the disposal of the Security Council a set of tools for the protection of civilians. It is the task of the Council to make full use of them.

In this respect, we would like to underline the importance of ensuring that the mandates of peacekeeping, political and peacebuilding missions include provisions regarding the protection of civilians, in particular, groups requiring special attention, women and children. These provisions should also address matters related to ensuring full and unimpeded access by humanitarian personnel to civilians affected by armed conflict.

At the same time, the Council has expressed its disposition to examine situations of systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, to adopt adequate measures to contribute to the establishment of a secure environment, and to consider establishing zones and corridors to protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance.

In addition to these important mandates, there are areas in the work of the Council in this matter where further improvement could be achieved. One example would be the improvement of the reporting mechanism on protection of civilians, in order to allow an appropriate follow-up in each of the situations included on the agenda of the Council.

The improvement of reporting mechanisms is also important in the initial moments of a crisis when civilians are affected and where an early warning might allow the Council to deploy preventive measures to protect civilians.

We also consider that there is room to advance in the normative work of the Security Council on the protection of civilians, in particular in areas where current crises show that there is a clear need for further development.

The situations of internal displacement are one of these areas. We commend the work and the leadership of OCHA in providing assistance and protection to internally displaced persons. At the same time, broader mandates are needed if there is political will in the international community to address the issue in its complexity. Other fields where further normative work can be explored include the linkages between small

arms and the protection of civilians, the disproportionate use of force and the use of war.

Finally, we understand that the situation of journalists in conflict also deserves the attention of the Council and we welcome the initiative of France and of other European countries in this respect.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Mr. President, let me begin by thanking your delegation for convening this meeting on protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, for his consistent and unyielding determination to assist the millions of innocent people who have been caught up in the negative consequences of armed conflict. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Furthermore, I would like to fully associate my delegation with the statement to be delivered later in the debate by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

As the statement by Mr. Egeland clearly illustrates, the efforts of the Security Council to maintain peace and security continues to come up short in the global perspective. It follows that the need to protect civilians affected by armed conflict is an ongoing imperative for the Council with no immediate end in sight. For that reason, we cannot continue to approach the question on an almost ad hoc basis. Populations in need must be able to depend on our will to come to their assistance, and perpetrators must be assured that their crimes will not go unpunished. Efforts by the Council and the international community as a whole to protect civilians in situations of conflict must be more predictable, timely and systematic.

A comprehensive framework for the protection of civilians already exists, particularly in the large body of international humanitarian law and in the three main Security Council resolutions on the issue. The immediate attention of the Council should therefore be devoted to implementing the protection framework in order to produce real improvements on the ground.

Emphasis should be placed on providing more comprehensive peacekeeping by, inter alia, incorporating the protection of civilians into the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations as a central element. Such mandates must be supported with the necessary capacity and practical support, enabling the peacekeeping forces to properly address protection needs on the ground, including by taking firm action against sexual violence and by providing protection to internally displaced persons.

The protection of civilians is a multifaceted challenge, and so must our response be. We must put to their best use the relatively limited number of tools available to the Security Council. That includes increasing our capacity to monitor and report on violations against civilians — an effort that is being successfully spearheaded on the issue of children affected by armed conflict. But it also includes referring violators to international courts, including the International Criminal Court, and using targeted sanctions to deter attacks against civilians, including humanitarian workers, workers for non-governmental organizations and journalists. The Council must overcome its reluctance to fully use those tools if it seriously wishes to move the protection agenda forward.

Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, in some cases, States manifestly fail to provide the necessary protection — or the perpetrator is the State itself. In situations in which a State embarks on waging war against its own population, the responsibility to protect the civilians affected becomes that of the international community. We have a moral and political obligation not to turn our backs on the many civilians who suffer from attacks carried out by, or with the consent of, their own Governments.

Whether or not the concept of the responsibility to protect needs further consideration is, as such, irrelevant. Given the lack of action and engagement elsewhere, the basic political commitment not to allow another Rwanda or Srebrenica is the responsibility of all of us, including the Security Council, as well as of other United Nations bodies.

In that regard, Denmark welcomes the decision by the Human Rights Council to convene a special session on the human rights situation in Darfur. It is high time that all actors engage in a comprehensive and constructive dialogue on that unacceptable situation. That in turn must lead to prompt and decisive action to alleviate the suffering of the people of Darfur.

The reporting and dissemination of news from areas entangled in conflict is often the only hope that

the affected populations have of influencing national, regional and international actors to step in and address the situation. Consequently, Denmark is deeply concerned by the alarming increase in attacks against journalists in recent armed conflicts. The continued targeting of journalists, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, is unacceptable and has now reached a level where the Security Council must express its clear condemnation of the situation. We hope that the initiative on this important issue, presented by France and Greece and supported by the United Kingdom, Slovakia and Denmark, will find general support in the Security Council.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his presentation.

According to the information that Mr. Egeland provided, much work remains to be done if the United Nations is to be effective in protecting civilians in armed conflict. In view of the situations that he described, we must reaffirm the responsibility of the United Nations to protect human rights throughout the world and the duty to prevent war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing. We must also reaffirm the importance of the task of ensuring humanitarian access to civilian populations affected by conflict and protecting the staff who provide such assistance, as well as all civilians involved. In that connection, Peru believes that the Security Council should continue to sponsor effective and feasible actions to ensure the protection of civilians who find themselves immersed in armed conflict.

I should like to make a few comments about the work of the Security Council in this area.

First, we seek full implementation of resolution 1674 (2006), which the Council adopted in April. We should continue to include clear guidelines and rules aimed at protecting civilians in all resolutions on countries in which there are peacekeeping operations and monitor their implementation. The Secretary-General must regularly inform the Council about the incorporation of the provisions of resolution 1674 (2006) into new or renewed mission mandates and continue to monitor specific cases in which conflicts and/or humanitarian crises have caused the civilian population to fall victim to violence, insecurity and systematic human rights violations.

Within the framework of the United Nations system, we must seek greater cooperation among the specialized agencies present on the ground so as to improve our efficiency in the protection of civilians, including displaced populations. Such efforts will help to provide more effective follow-up to Security Council decisions.

Likewise, the Council must cooperate with the International Criminal Court in the fight against impunity. Effectively penalizing of those responsible for grave human rights violations is an obligation of the international community and a powerful signal of the validity of the rule of law.

We express our grave concern at the persistence of situations of risk for civilian populations that Mr. Egeland cited this morning, including the situations in Darfur, Gaza, Chad, northern Uganda, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo. We took note of the five priorities that he set out for future work by the Security Council on the issue of protecting civilians. They clearly reflect the areas requiring greater attention, such as preventive measures, timely information on humanitarian crises and cooperative efforts with civil society, including non-governmental organizations.

Finally, I wish to express Peru's gratitude to Mr. Jan Egeland for his commitment to the defence and protection of civilian populations in the immense humanitarian crises that the world has witnessed.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I should like to express to you, Sir, our pleasure to see you presiding over the Security Council during the month of December. Qatar is a country whose awareness of issues concerning peace and security as they relate to civilian populations needs no further proof. Your country has expressed its commitment in that regard on numerous occasions, particularly with respect to the upheavals that have recently characterized the Middle East crisis.

I would also like to commend the Ambassador of Peru and his team for the very professional job that they did in presiding over the Council last month.

We would like to thank you, Sir, for beginning your term at the head of the Council by taking the initiative to hold this debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict — an issue whose importance is clearly reflected in the number and the

gravity of situations in the world today that, increasingly, highlight the vulnerability of civilians.

Mr. Jan Egeland briefed us with the expertise and depth for which he is known, and our Organization has every interest in making use of that information.

The most recent statistics put at 27 million the number of people affected by war or similar disasters in 29 countries throughout the world. These people are described as refugees or displaced persons, and their numbers clearly demonstrate the scope of this growing phenomenon. No continent has been spared. Asia, southern Europe, the Middle East and Africa have all been affected, and it is women and children who are the most vulnerable.

Armed conflicts are man-made catastrophes, unlike so-called natural disasters — although the latter can often be directly or indirectly attributed to human responsibility. They have physical, moral and legal consequences that affect the integrity, freedom and basic rights of individuals.

With respect to conflict situations — which we are dealing with here — the protection of civilians has been made one of the core principles of international humanitarian law. Accordingly, civilians who are not taking part in hostilities should not under any circumstance be attacked. Rather, they must be spared and protected. That is set forth in specific international instruments, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, as well as Security Council resolution 1674 (2006). We must, more than ever, ensure that concrete measures are in place for follow up and compliance with those instruments.

The Secretary-General launched a consolidated appeal for 2007 to provide $3.9 billion in humanitarian assistance to protect the thousands of persons in need. We thank him for that.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the efforts made by a number of countries, in particular Sweden, which is the only country to have devoted 0.05 per cent of its gross domestic product to humanitarian assistance. We call upon other countries not to weaken their commitments at a time of increasing need for civilians affected by armed conflict or natural disasters.

Another important aspect is the urgent need to provide assistance to non-belligerent parties. I am referring to the work done, often at great sacrifice and with great courage, by intergovernmental organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees and, increasingly, non-governmental organizations. We must protect the men and women who work for those organizations, who, often at great danger to their own lives, provide assistance and hope to those who are in need. We would like to pay them a well-deserved tribute. We must increase awareness of the need to provide optimal security conditions for humanitarian workers so that they can carry out their noble mission.

The obligation to protect civilians rests above all with Governments. Governments must therefore do everything in their power to provide the most effective protection to all those for whom they are responsible, as the legitimate power invested with the necessary latitude to provide for their citizens — as well as for their partners — the highest possible level of security.

In this Chamber on 28 November, we discussed the plight of children caught up in armed conflict. By expanding the scope of the application of international conventions to all innocent civilians, we are seeking to highlight the importance of extending the rule of law.

At a time when so-called conventional wars against what used to be called enemy armies or enemy nations are often outnumbered by so-called civil conflicts, there is a dangerous blurring of the line between outright crime and what is euphemistically called collateral damage. We can see that in Darfur, with the sad and bloody escalation of conflict orchestrated by armed groups with questionable motives and a Sudanese Government whose powerlessness verges on indifference and whose nervousness borders on abdication of responsibility in the face of atrocities that are becoming increasingly intolerable.

In Africa, the conflict in Darfur is well on the way to becoming the prototype of a situation characterized by the denial of justice and by cynicism that goes against the most basic values of human dignity. It is true that a new chapter has begun — or is about to begin — in Sierra Leone and Liberia, then in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where terrible atrocities had been reported, as well as with regard to the disastrous toll wrought by the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda.

The Security Council has on a number of occasions deplored the fate of populations in the Middle East, who are victims of military blunders or of acts of terrorism, such as those directed at bewildered civilians in Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Iraq. Likewise, in the former Yugoslavia, the international community in recent years strongly deplored the heinous crimes.

In such cases, as in others, the international community is confronted by two different obligations that, however, are not incompatible: the obligation to prevent, and the obligation to act. My delegation, as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on conflict prevention, is currently working to determine the various factors that might enable the Council to work out a practical approach to help to prevent conflicts whose main victims are civilians.

In conclusion, I would like to say that today's discussion gives us an opportunity on the one hand to reaffirm our shared commitment to the provisions of international humanitarian law aimed at protecting civilians in armed conflict — they must be protected in all circumstances — and, on the other, to consider what actions can be taken at a number of levels, as well as their impact on the people involved.

In other words, we must prevent man-made disasters from amplifying the effects of natural disasters in a world already left so poorly protected by human ambitions. But that is for another debate. For the time being, we express our support for the draft presidential statement, to which we will give favourable consideration.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Congo for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to congratulate you once again, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December. We extend once again our appreciation to the delegation of Peru for a task well accomplished during the month of November.

Mr. President, we thank you for having organized this important debate and wish the State of Qatar every success during its presidency of the Security Council for the month of December 2006. Let me also thank Mr. Jan Egeland, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his insightful briefing.

Enhancing the protection of civilians in armed conflict is a fundamental responsibility of States and of the international community; we cannot afford to fail in that respect. It is estimated that, of the hundreds of thousands of people who lose their lives due to the direct effects of war and low-intensity insurgency and to war-related famine and disease each year, almost 90 per cent are innocent non-combatants. Other violent acts include reprisals, forced recruitment, kidnapping, rape, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. The protection of civilians ought to include protection for humanitarian workers involved with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Such insecurity is due to the presence or activities of armed groups and militias within and around camps and settlements. Governments need to be reminded of their obligation to provide protection.

As correctly pointed out by Mr. Egeland, the internal displacement of civilian populations in areas of conflict is on the increase, both in terms of numbers and of the complexity of protection needs. It is good news that the number of refugees is steadily declining, but the problem of internally displaced persons requires that renewed efforts be made to address it. The High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence has recognized the need for a more coordinated response operationally in providing resources and protection to IDPs.

Children, especially, have become the most affected victims of armed conflict. In some conflicts, the ratio of child soldiers is said to be as high as 60 per cent. There is no doubt that the realities on the ground are far crueler than statistics would indicate. We therefore join in emphasizing the need to enhance the efforts of the United Nations to protect civilians in armed conflict, including children.

Admittedly, the most important strategic objective has been to prevent armed conflict and its recurrence in the first place. That objective goes hand in hand with the initiative to urgently make the United Nations a more effective instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. While the ongoing protection process has always played a vital role and will continue to do so, any progress made in the protection of civilians will constitute an integral contribution to the maintenance of global peace and security.

It is for that reason that we reaffirm our commitment in support of this highly cherished humanitarian cause. We also condemn each and every party involved in all situations of conflict in which innocent civilian populations are deliberately targeted and attacked as a strategy of war, for military advantage. Such unacceptable behaviour is contrary to the civilized conduct of modern warfare. It is our conviction that all such perpetrators must be held responsible for violating international law and that such cases should be prosecuted in order to put an end to the culture of impunity.

It is our view that today's fruitful discussions should go beyond a naming and shaming exercise. The Security Council has been greatly concerned at, and remains seized of, the level of human tragedy experienced by civilian populations, for example in the context of recent events in the Middle East and in Darfur.

The greatest challenge to the Council and to the international community as a whole occurs when Governments not only fail to protect their citizens but are themselves the cause of insecurity to their citizens. How can we exercise our collective responsibility to protect under such circumstances? We should hold such Governments responsible and accountable for their actions.

Equally challenging is the identification of existing gaps in the normative standards of international law and in their implementation by humanitarian actors, and the need to assist States that lack adequate capacity to protect various categories of affected civilians.

Experience in the Great Lakes has shown that a regional approach to addressing security and development problems has proved to be useful and much more effective. We appreciate the support of the Council and of the entire international community for the peace processes in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have brought an end to the protracted wars there and paved the way to national reconciliation, the institutionalization of the rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Indeed, the emerging peace, and the anticipated peace and security compact to be signed later this month in Nairobi by the countries of the region, will bring great relief to the region and enhance regional security and the safety of civilians.

Tanzania is very grateful that such positive developments have come about through the assistance rendered by the Council in the promotion of peace and security in the Great Lakes region.

We agree with those delegations that raised the issue of addressing the proliferation and illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons, which fuel conflicts and increase civilian casualties. This issue requires more concerted action by the various organs of the United Nations system as a way of enhancing the protection of civilians.

I cannot conclude my statement without noting my delegation's great concern at the emerging trend whereby some State and non-State actors are openly compromising the neutrality and questioning the impartiality of the United Nations to deploy peacekeeping troops or observers in areas they control. We should assure Member States that the United Nations is by definition an indispensable partner of its Member States in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The core duty of the United Nations is not only to maintain peace and security among Member States, but also to protect their respective civilians. Human security and safety should be as important as the security of States. The two must be addressed concurrently.

Finally, we would like to restate our appreciation to Mr. Egeland for his role in raising the profile of humanitarian issues on the international agenda in general and on the agenda of the Council in particular. He leaves behind a legacy of courage and dedication and, above all, of commitment to protecting and assisting civilians in precarious and vulnerable situations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we would like to welcome you, Sir, and the delegation of Qatar, who will be presiding over the Security Council in December - the last month of the year. We would like also to thank the delegation of Peru, which held the Council's presidency in November, for having effectively discharged its duties.

Our delegation would like to express its gratitude to Mr. Egeland for his update on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We are grateful to Mr.

Egeland for the efforts he has made in his post and wish him every success in his future activities.

Unfortunately, not a day goes by without our learning of more murders, abuses and other types of violence against civilians in armed conflict. Despite the existence of a myriad of instruments in the area of humanitarian and human rights law, in many of today's conflicts civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure are not simply the costs of waging war, but the result of premeditated actions. Like direct violence, the destruction of medical and social protection infrastructure during hostilities also causes loss of life from disease and starvation. This past year has been no exception in that regard, and was marked by further conflict that caused human suffering. This once again underscores the importance of a prompt response by the United Nations to cases of violence against innocent civilians and to the destruction of civilian infrastructure during armed conflict. This subject has taken on increasing importance in the humanitarian agenda of the United Nations. It calls for systemic measures at the international, regional and national levels. The key points in this connection are streamlined coordination and a clear division of labour, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Against that backdrop, we call for the greatest prudence when dealing with documents and concepts worked out without coordination with all United Nations Member States or without any general discussion in the United Nations. We urge that they not be promoted as being widely recognized under international standards.

In that context, it is to be expected that the concept of the responsibility to protect has not yet become a reality today specifically because in its present form it does not enjoy sufficiently broad support from Member States. In our view, it would be wiser to talk about the implementation of the more acceptable option enshrined in the 2005 Summit Outcome, namely, the responsibility to protect civilians from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We would once again like to emphasize that, under this concept, the primary responsibility lies with national Governments, whose efforts must be supported by the international community without undermining State sovereignty.

We expect the Peacebuilding Commission to take specific steps to assist in the stabilization of post-conflict situations.

In the context of conflict settlement, we note the growing importance being given by the Security Council to problems affecting civilians as part of its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Resolution 1674 (2006) was a further step in the Council's efforts in that regard. We are certain that, at this point, it is important to focus on the implementation of existing Council decisions to protect civilians, including those that highlight the subject of women and children, and not to dissipate our efforts by generating new documents in this area. The main goal should be to ensure the practical implementation of existing legal norms and the decisions already taken.

Our delegation attaches great importance to eliminating impunity and to the prosecution of all persons guilty of crimes against civilians. In that regard, we would note the role of the International Criminal Court.

When it comes to protecting civilians, it is necessary to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel themselves, whose effective work is crucial to providing assistance to civilians. At the same time, we would like to underscore the importance of having humanitarian workers comply with the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality.

In conclusion, we would be remiss if we were to fail to refer to the importance of preventing armed conflict, which calls for eradicating the root causes of conflict. In that connection, we fully agree with our Chinese colleagues. As a first step, it is important to at least avoid creating situations that are fraught with violence against civilians. Such a goal can be achieved only through the joint efforts of the entire international community. The United Nations is meant to play a leading role in that regard.

The President *(spoke* in Arabic): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Qatar.

At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his briefing this morning.

In accordance with the Charter, the prevention of armed conflict is without a doubt one of the first priorities of the international Organization. However, the most tragic losses in armed conflict are those inflicted upon civilians. Such losses are among the most heinous consequences of armed conflict. For that reason, it is essential that United Nations bodies for the protection of civilians in armed conflict devote sufficient attention, time and efforts to that task.

Despite efforts to protect civilians, there has unfortunately been an increase in the number of armed conflicts throughout the world in recent years. There has also been a noticeable change in the nature of such conflicts. Urban and residential areas have increasingly been transformed into battlefields in cases of internal conflict and civil strife. That has contributed to the surge in the number of victims among civilian populations.

Although armed conflict takes a higher toll among women and children in comparison to other groups, the international community has only recently begun to realize that fact. We must, therefore, focus greater attention on the suffering of women and children caught up in armed conflict. We also take note of the ongoing recruitment of children and adolescents' which makes them victims of armed conflict.

Moreover, many of the armed conflicts raging today involve non-State actors. Many such actors fail to uphold international humanitarian law and fail to commit themselves to respecting human rights. That problem must be addressed differently from the way such violations committed by States and Governments are addressed.

In the context of the efforts made to put an end to armed conflict, it is crucial to obtain correct information about unfolding developments. That important task falls to journalists, who face serious challenges in delivering information to the public. The international community, and especially the parties to a conflict, must therefore commit themselves to protecting journalists, for they too are civilians.

It is abhorrent that civilians find themselves in harm's way during armed conflict. But even more abhorrent is the deliberate violent targeting of civilians. This phenomenon is not confined only to targeting civilians for acts of violence, but it also includes indiscriminate acts of violence without taking into account the necessary measures to avoid striking civilian targets. That constitutes cynical disregard for the lives of civilians and, as such, it is no different from targeting them deliberately.

The State of Qatar is part of a region in which civilians continue to suffer from the repercussions of armed violence. Dozens of innocent civilians are killed in Iraq every day. The war in Lebanon last July resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 people in only one month, most of them civilians. There have also been numerous victims in occupied Palestinian territory as a result of ongoing violence. They too are predominantly civilians. The total number of civilians killed since the outbreak of the recent crisis in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict exceeds 4,000 since 2000.

Endangering the lives of civilians is not only a violation of international norms, laws and conventions — including the Charter of the United Nations — it is also a violation of numerous resolutions and presidential statements issued by the Security Council on the protection of civilians.

Prevention is always better than cure. It is important that we treat symptoms; however, it is more important that we address the root causes of this problem. Therein lies the importance of adopting policies that promote sound sustainable development, building a harmonious society, bringing about national reconciliation and encouraging preventive diplomacy. To do otherwise would constitute reaction at best. We need comprehensive plans to ensure more protection of civilians, plans that include existing mechanisms. Those, in turn, must be translated into reality and implemented, while activating the role of humanitarian organizations and emphasizing the need that they remain unbiased, neutral and independent.

The United Nations role in the protection of civilians is indispensable. We note that the protection of civilians is a priority of United Nations peacekeeping operations and that, in that context, it is especially important to have child protection advisers during conflict, particularly when children are endangered. In that regard, we call on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to include child protection advisers in the structure of peacekeeping operations, and particularly the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon following its recent expansion.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Carmon (Israel): At the outset, I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council and to thank you for convening this open debate. We trust that, with your able stewardship, you will aptly guide the work of the Council in dealing with the various challenges that the international community faces around the world.

I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his briefing and for his dedication to addressing humanitarian concerns across the globe over the past years. We wish him much success in the future.

Israel assigns vital importance to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and is encouraged by the continued efforts of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and his staff in that area. We believe that all individuals should live without fear of physical, sexual, psychological and other forms of abuse stemming from conflict.

As Mr. Egeland said this morning, the international community must demonstrate that it has a "depoliticized [and] truly shared interest" in ensuring the protection of civilians. Efforts will be "judged by the extent to which our actions have made a difference". To that extent, Israel appreciates the emphasis in recent reports on protecting women and children, and believes that continued grass-roots efforts, alongside greater governmental engagement, can help end that deeply troubling phenomenon.

In recent months, we have been reminded of the vulnerability of and danger posed to civilians in our region by forces of extremism and instability, as evidenced by the conflict with Hizbollah in Lebanon and the ongoing Palestinian terror war against Israel. We have been reminded again that no side has a monopoly on victimhood or human suffering, and that the jagged shards of armed conflict can cut deep and wide, affecting all civilians – Israeli, Lebanese and Palestinian.

Over the summer, Hizbollah terrorists operating in southern Lebanon fired some 4,000 Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, explicitly targeting civilians in their homes and places of work. Hizbollah's onslaught of raining rockets forced nearly 1 million Israeli civilians to flee their homes, causing insufferable damage to civilian life and infrastructure.

Similarly, the relentless Qassam rockets fired by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip at Israeli communities in the South within the past year — more than 1,000 rockets to date — were all direct and targeted attempts on the lives of civilians, attacks against schools and synagogues, kindergartens and classrooms, shopping malls and playgrounds.

The blatant disregard of terrorists for the value of human life is a brutal maliciousness that we have seen even among their own populations. Hizbollah stored its rockets inside homes and launched attacks from positions nestled within the fabric of civilian life. In using civilians as human shields, Hizbollah sought to evade responsibility and accountability for its crimes.

Palestinian terrorists, too, have employed civilians as shields. Recently, Palestinian civilians in Gaza were specifically called to surround the home of a known terrorist. Human Rights Watch recorded the incident, declaring that

> "[c]alling civilians to a location that the opposing side has identified for attack is at worst human shielding, at best failing to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of attack. Both are violations of international humanitarian law".

The deliberate blurring of the distinction between terrorist and civilian is a terrorist tactic. It is a gross injustice that endangers civilians and betrays the principles of human dignity and life.

It is the obligation of all nations first and foremost to protect their people from all harm, but it is also the obligation of all nations to ensure that they and their citizens not endanger others. It is an obligation which Israel embraces. No doubt, strategic and ethical complexities regarding counter-terrorism exist; we addressed Israel's perspective on the issue when we last spoke before the Council on this subject. But in the quest to secure our world and protect all peoples, we must strike the proper balance. Failure to hold terrorist groups accountable gravely endangers the vitality of the human project and will only encourage them to increase their abuse, manipulation and exploitation of civilians.

The ceasefire in our region, initiated and agreed upon by Prime Minister Olmert and Chairman Abbas one week ago, is a sign of promise for all citizens of the region — all civilians, no matter their nationality.

But we must see to it as well that the underlying tensions of the conflict and Hamas's disregard for its internationally accepted obligations — recognition of Israel, renouncing violence and terror, and abiding by previous agreements — are addressed.

The past few months have been difficult, with difficulties levied particularly on civilians, but the past cannot be changed and the victims of the conflict cannot be returned. What remains is the course we chart together for the future. Prime Minister Olmert reasserted that position in his remarks just last week:

> "All we can do today is prevent further tragedies and bequeath to the younger generation a bright horizon and hope for life."

Let us hope that all sides will keep to their commitments identified within the ceasefire and that an authentic Palestinian partner will emerge from it, dedicated to the vision and cause of peace.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the pleasure to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland and Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

I wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to discuss this important issue in the Security Council. I also want to thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his informative briefing. The European Union would like to extend its appreciation to Mr. Egeland for his excellent work as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The protection of civilians in armed conflict is a complex challenge. Civilians, including women and children, continue to bear the brunt of armed conflicts. The European Union welcomes the sustained attention paid by the Security Council to that important issue.

At the 2005 World Summit, the heads of State and Government recognized that the protection of civilians in armed conflict is a key concern of the international community. The European Union reiterates its support for the historic Summit Outcome conclusion that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity – a conclusion which was reaffirmed by resolution 1674 (2006).

The best way to protect civilians in armed conflicts is to prevent conflicts. The EU is pleased to note the strengthening of the culture of prevention across the United Nations and vigorously supports the continuation of this trend. The Security Council plays an important role in this regard. Timely and adequate briefings by the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and other relevant actors will help the Council to act sufficiently early on in conflict situations to effectively protect civilians at risk.

Humanitarian access is a crucial part of protecting civilians in armed conflict. The European Union is troubled by the denial of full and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in need of help, especially when this is used as a political tool and as a weapon of war. Also, attacks on humanitarian personnel cannot be tolerated. The European Union fully supports the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. We urge all parties to conflicts to provide unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and to take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety, security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel and of the United Nations and its associated personnel.

The EU is alarmed by the fact that 63 journalists and media staff were killed in armed conflicts in 2005 and 75 in 2006. The Security Council should take note of such a dramatic development. Journalists are civilians and as such are entitled to full protection.

The European Union believes it is vital to investigate crimes under international law committed against civilians and bring their perpetrators to justice. The restoration of law and order to prevent future violence and abuses and the tackling of impunity should be a priority. It is for States concerned to bring justice to perpetrators of the most serious crimes and for the international community to support their efforts. Where States fail to bring perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice, the international community should be able to act.

The European Union urges States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute and to the treaties of international humanitarian, human

rights and refugee laws, and to take all appropriate measures to ensure proper investigation and prosecution of any violations of the relevant rules.

The EU highlights the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and holds that the protection of civilians in armed conflict can be properly achieved only by strengthening the role of women as constructive actors in developing and implementing appropriate responses. Protection from physical and sexual violence remains one of the major challenges of civilian protection. Peacekeeping operations should be mandated to employ all feasible measures to prevent sexual violence and to address their effects where they take place.

United Nations peacekeeping operations and associated personnel have a particular responsibility in their own conduct in this regard. The European Union reiterates its full support for the policy of zero tolerance of sexual abuse and exploitation by such personnel, introduced by the United Nations, and has adopted the same policy in its own European security and defence policy operations.

The human rights of millions of children continue to be violated and millions of children suffer in situations of armed conflict. Every day children are killed, maimed, abducted or recruited, in violation of applicable law, as child soldiers, fall victims of rape or other grave sexual violence, and suffer from attacks against schools and hospitals that prevent them from enjoying their rights to education and health care. The European Union is fully committed to protecting children from the grave violations that occur in armed conflicts. It is mainstreaming the issues of children and armed conflict into its advocacy, policies and programmes and has continued to implement its plan of action for the guidelines on children and armed conflict. In this context, the EU commends the sustained activity of the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflicts, as well as the dedicated work carried out by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ms. Coomaraswamy, UNICEF and the child protection advisers in peacekeeping operations.

The special protection needs of refugees and displaced persons must be adequately addressed. The European Union welcomes the call by the Security Council for all parties to a conflict to provide for these needs in peace processes and to create conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of displaced persons. Also, peacekeeping missions must have mandates and resources to guarantee this, for example, by providing security for and around displaced persons camps.

The easy availability and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons continue to pose a grave danger for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Another issue that the European Union would like to highlight is that of explosive remnants of war. Progress has been made since the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in 2001, but small arms and light weapons continue to be the real weapons of mass destruction today. They kill thousands every day, are instrumental in depriving millions of their human rights, undermine development and fuel conflict, crime and terrorism. The EU believes that transfer controls, marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, control of arms brokering and ammunition and the integration of such measures into development assistance need to be tackled in order to better protect civilians.

The protection of civilians in armed conflict is a multifaceted challenge. The European Union is fully committed and works actively to protect civilians in armed conflict. In cooperation with the United Nations, the EU continues its relentless work for the promotion of peace and conflict prevention so that in the future no one, child or adult, is forced to suffer in armed conflicts.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mrs. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your work as President of the Security Council during the month of December. We thank Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his illustrative presentation. We would also like to express our thanks to him for his support in this important area.

The Government of Colombia reaffirms its commitment to international humanitarian law, particularly to the norms related to the protection of civilians. We underline the importance for international assistance in this field to adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence enshrined in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

Following these principles — while appropriately channelling the collective efforts in support of national authorities — acquires a greater significance when cooperation is directed at countries that enjoy democratic institutions and legitimately constituted Governments.

On this occasion my delegation also wishes to reiterate the importance of United Nations agencies being fully familiar with the work being carried out by national Governments in the area of protection of civilians when establishing the priorities of their work and informing the Organization on the respective situations. Objective, balanced and impartial information includes the identification of shortcomings and challenges, but also includes the recognition of the progress in each country.

In the case of Colombia, it is necessary that the reality of our situation and the efforts made by the national Government to face the complex problems that affect the civilian population be properly reflected in the reports on humanitarian affairs being distributed in the United Nations. They help to define appropriate and effective support from the international community.

Colombia has had to face the actions of violent groups that have attacked the civilian population. Those groups, financed by transnational drug trafficking, have caused internal displacements, kidnappings, the recruiting of children and other forms of violence against civilians. The National Government has been acting decisively to face the violent actions of those groups, restore security and thus create the conditions for the proper protection of Colombians. Our population has responded to violence from those criminal organizations with solid civic support for the Government's democratic security policy and for strengthening that policy during the second term of President Alvaro Uribe Vélez, which began recently.

As a result of that policy, the security situation in the country has improved noticeably. Today in Colombia, the national police and civilian authorities have established a permanent presence in all of the country's municipalities, a situation that four years ago was not guaranteed in 157 communities. Today, the State has strengthened its capacity to intervene using the armed forces to deal with criminal groups. Coca crops have been reduced by nearly 50 per cent since 2000. The demobilization of violent groups is being carried out and nearly 43,000 former members of guerrilla and self-defence groups have surrendered their weapons.

As a result of those realities, in the last four years all crime indicators have been substantially reduced, including homicides, kidnappings and various attacks against the civilian population. The number of new annual displacement cases has also been reduced. In 2002, that number included 425,000 people. In 2005, it was reduced to 169,000, and to 90,000 in the first ten months of 2006.

A fundamental part of Government action involves care for vulnerable groups. The State is implementing humanitarian policies to care for civilians who have become victims of violence. The Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation coordinates the comprehensive care programme for displaced persons. That programme is carried out using an approach based on the restitution of the rights of displaced households and their social and economic reintegration into their places of origin, or into the places of voluntary relocation.

To that effect, national and international cooperation resources are allocated. Likewise, the programme includes emergency care for displaced persons. Furthermore, the promotion of the return of families — keeping in mind the humanitarian principles of voluntary return and security — has fostered the return of 120,000 people in recent years. On the other hand, stabilized socio-economic conditions are being promoted through actions including loans for productive projects and technical training, complementary support for the acquisition of homes and subsidized health services for those families and guaranteed education for their children.

Several recommendations that have been repeatedly presented in United Nations reports on the issue of displacement have been implemented in my country in recent years. The problems are complex, but the Government has spared no effort to face them decisively. Colombia hopes that this progress is recognized. The challenge in front of us is still great, but only through a realistic vision of our situation, free from prejudice, will it be possible to concentrate our efforts in an effective manner for the benefit of affected groups.

The protection of civilians also includes specific measures and actions for indigenous communities. The

Defence Ministry has implemented a policy for the protection of ethnic minorities, which has been agreed by indigenous organizations, through instructions to State forces that seek to promote the protection of communities and guarantee the respect for their collective and individual rights in carrying out their operations. Likewise, the Government has prepared, with the participation of indigenous organizations, a comprehensive plan of support for vulnerable communities, aimed at raising long-term social welfare and guaranteeing security conditions for the communities affected by poverty, violence or drug trafficking. The situation of the specific groups that have been the object of displacement or threats by violent groups deserves special priority and action by the State, in the framework of policies to care for the displaced.

The Government of Colombia fully shares the objective of guaranteeing the protection of the civilian population and of the enjoyment of their rights. Any action in that area, including international support, should be realized on the basis of cooperation and appropriate coordination with national authorities, under an impartial approach and in strict observance of the principles that guide the activities of the United Nations in the area of humanitarian assistance.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Protection of civilians is a primary objective of the United Nations, including the Security Council. The Council has stressed — most recently in resolution 1674 (2006) — that the deliberate targeting of civilians and other protected persons may even constitute a threat to international peace and security.

There are many factors leading to the increased vulnerability of civilians during armed conflicts. A major threat to civilians, both during and after armed conflicts, is the use of cluster munitions. A number of countries in different parts of the world are affected by the use of cluster munitions. The humanitarian consequences are enormous and the setback to development is massive. We must prevent cluster munitions from becoming a new humanitarian disaster the way landmines did before we managed to put the Landmine Convention in place. We must act now to establish an international ban on cluster munitions. Norway supports the call made by Secretary-General Annan and also reiterated here today by United Nations Under-Secretary-General Egeland — to turn the use of such cluster munitions into history.

Forced displacement is another major obstacle to the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) often find themselves trapped by the fact that the Governments primarily responsible for their protection are the very same ones that have created conditions leading to the displacement. Despite their vulnerability and urgent needs for protection, IDPs often fall between the mandates of various humanitarian bodies.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were developed to meet the specific challenges of IDPs. We want to underline the normative as well as the operational importance of the Guidelines, and we are encouraged by the increasing use of the Guidelines as a standard, by States, United Nations agencies and regional and non-governmental organizations.

Situations of armed conflict pose particular risks for women and girls. Violence against women, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, often becomes a weapon of war. Unfortunately, there is often reluctance to deal with gender-based and sexual violence. We must ensure an end to impunity for those grave criminal acts and provide adequate protection for women and girls.

Regarding humanitarian assistance, recent evaluations indicate that the humanitarian community still fails to integrate a gender perspective in a systematic manner in their programming and implementation practices. The result is that the rights of women and girls are not sufficiently protected. Norway supports the initiative by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to develop a five-point action plan to rectify this dysfunctionality on the part of the humanitarian community.

A very specific concern as regards gender discrimination is sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations and associated personnel involved in international operations. Norway strongly regrets the fact that this abhorrent practice continues to require our attention. We remain strongly committed to working actively to prevent such behaviour by all categories of personnel. In that connection, Norwegian military authorities enforce a zero-tolerance policy regarding the purchase of sexual services, which applies to all military personnel serving abroad. The ultimate aim of our efforts should be to instil zero-tolerance on an international level based on the

standards in the Secretary General's bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Armed conflicts are generally characterized by grave and systematic human rights abuses, impunity and absence of accountability. Whether we are able to end impunity will strongly influence how we are able to prevent future conflicts. Transitional justice that ensures accountability, serves justice and achieves reconciliation is a prerequisite in this regard.

Norway wants to pay tribute to the courageous human rights defenders, be they journalists, lawyers, staff of human rights non-governmental organizations or others, who every day risk their lives and security for the lives and freedom of others. Their cause should be ours. We need their eyes, ears and hearts even more during armed conflicts and in volatile phases of transition.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his active engagement in the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflict, including today's briefing to the Council.

Mr. President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): I would like to thank Qatar for convening this open debate today. The Canadian Government wishes to pay tribute to Jan Egeland for the great commitment and very strong leadership he has brought to protecting civilians worldwide.

All people should live in reasonable expectation that they will not be subject to serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. People should not live in daily fear that they will be deliberately targeted. Yet millions of people around the world are targeted and remain displaced and dispossessed. In Darfur, Sri Lanka, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and northern Uganda, men, women and children face daily threats including threats to the very right to life.

Today, I would like to focus on three themes. First, the Security Council must demonstrate courageous leadership and unwavering political will to ensure that populations at risk have access to the greatest protection possible. Secondly, continued emphasis must be placed on ending impunity. Perpetrators of attacks against civilians in violation of international law must be held accountable for their actions. Thirdly, we all share in the responsibility to advance a culture of protection. The Council, the United Nations Secretariat and agencies and Member States must make advocacy, monitoring and capacity-building watchwords for our efforts.

Since the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict was first brought onto the Security Council agenda, important and practical progress has been made. In the field, agencies are devoting greater attention to refining their abilities to meet protection needs. United Nations missions are authorized to use force to deter and respond to attacks on civilians and some are organizing themselves so that civilian protection acts as a unifying cross-mission theme. In addition, new sanctions regimes have been more attentive to the need to target their impact so as to mitigate unintended humanitarian consequences.

Canada very much welcomes the adoption of resolution 1674 (2006) earlier this year. Nevertheless, efforts to date suggest that international action, including by the Council, remains uneven. We need look no further than the grave humanitarian situation in Darfur to understand that our vigilance must not wane. Canada is deeply concerned by the continuing violence and the persistent culture of impunity in Darfur. We condemn persistent violence, in particular sexual and gender-based violence committed by all parties, including in internally displaced persons camps, where rape continues to be used as a weapon of war. Canada continues to call for an immediate end to the ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur and an end to the persistent culture of impunity there. We urge the Government of Sudan to prevent further violations, to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice in accordance with international law, and to facilitate humanitarian action.

Similarly, the recent shelling of an internally displaced persons camp near Vakarai in Sri Lanka highlights the heavy price paid by civilians in that long-standing conflict, particularly where perceptions of civilians have grown ambiguous, and thus their targeting, recruitment as child soldiers, or denial of assistance to them, is no longer viewed as taboo by some. We urge the parties to the conflict to exercise the utmost restraint and to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by promoting the protection of civilians and facilitating safe and unhindered access for humanitarian agencies to civilians in need.

The linkage between civilian protection and the maintenance of international peace and security is well established. The Council has a direct role to play in encouraging and promoting the protection of civilians. Council members have repeatedly pledged that they and the wider international community will take steps in this regard. We applaud this leadership and we will continue to support and monitor the implementation of the Council's commitments.

Looking ahead, the Council must be more proactive in responding to situations where civilians are at risk. Greater focus should be given to timely, credible preventative measures, in addition to restorative actions. That means drawing on the many levers at the Council's disposal, including good offices, envoys and monitoring missions. The Council should show leadership by demonstrating a greater willingness to draw on the United Nations human rights mechanisms for early warning, while promoting preventative deployments, targeted sanctions, diplomatic initiatives and adherence to international legal instruments in support of affected populations.

In that, strong and consistent Security Council resolutions are critical. Where peace support operations are given protection mandates, these mandates must be unambiguous and backed up by adequate financial and human resources.

Effective action also requires consistent follow-up. The Council must be proactive in monitoring the implementation of its protection-related commitments. That means drawing on lessons learned from missions with protection mandates, as well as being prepared to rethink and readjust policy approaches. The Council should outline specific actions to be taken by parties to a conflict, monitor their implementation and apply penalties if actions are not taken. The message must be unequivocal — perpetrators of abuse will be held accountable for their actions.

On Darfur, the Council and the wider international community has been divided and inconsistent. There must be consequences for countries that violate the arms embargo and for all parties that continue to violate the peace agreements and human rights in Darfur.

We urge all parties to adhere to the principles agreed to in Addis Ababa, including the need to re-energize the political process, to establish a strengthened ceasefire, and to find a way forward for peacekeeping in Darfur. The Darfur crisis can only be resolved through a political process, not through violence.

Field visits by the Council are also key. Council missions provide an indispensable opportunity to urge parties to a conflict to allow safe and unimpeded access by aid workers to those in need, to reinforce that there will be no impunity for genocide and war crimes, and to ensure that United Nations missions are being vigilant in protecting civilians and meeting the needs of displaced populations.

There can be no impunity. States must prosecute those who commit genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other serious human rights violations. No amnesty should be granted for international crimes.

The Council and the broader United Nations membership have a particular responsibility to ensure that those who commit serious violations of international law are brought to justice. Canada is also concerned by deadly attacks on United Nations and associated personnel. A recent study has highlighted that attacks against aid workers are increasingly politically motivated and that national staff are more at risk than ever before. Canada urges Member States to sign or ratify the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and its Optional Protocol. Member States must show the willingness to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of acts against United Nations and associated personnel.

Let me also underscore the importance of protecting and promoting the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In that respect, the security of journalists — particularly in armed conflict — requires our ongoing attention. The United Nations must also address hate media in its own mission planning and operations. If left unchecked, hate media can further fan the flames of conflict and put populations at greater risk. Early efforts by the United Nations to counter hate media and to ensure that those who propagate hatred are brought to justice are important preventive steps.

(*spoke in French*)

While the leadership of the Security Council is essential to strengthen the protection of civilians, it is a responsibility that must be shared by all of us: the Council, the Secretariat, United Nations agencies and

Member States. Canada encourages the Secretariat and United Nations agencies to leave no room for ambiguity in their assessments, because previous resolutions have authorized them to indicate to Member States situations that require their attention to protect civilians. It is essential to provide the Council and other competent bodies with concrete advice and recommendations.

The effectiveness of United Nations action depends on the capacity of United Nations country teams on the ground. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Humanitarian and Resident Coordinators and individual staff must be in a position to indicate protection concerns to parties to conflict. Progress in this area has been only modest; we must further strengthen this capacity. In addition, those deployed with a Security Council mandate to protect civilians must better understand what is expected of them and take a joint approach. For example, it is essential that all actors cooperate to ensure that the predeployment training of military and civilian police includes a specific focus on civilian protection when such a mandate is entrusted to them.

The 10-point plan proposed by Mr. Egeland requires our sustained support. Each point represents a concrete and essential component. Canada wholeheartedly endorses this programme.

A strong framework now exists for the protection of civilians. Resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000) and 1674 (2006), together with resolutions on conflict prevention, women and peace and security, children and armed conflict, the safety of humanitarian workers, impunity and the exploitation of natural resources are a clear set of mutually reinforcing Council commitments. To the extent that they create a framework for Council action, those resolutions also establish criteria that all Member States can apply to hold the Council accountable when it is slow to act.

The most direct measures of success are the number of lives saved, the number of displacements avoided and the mitigation and settlement of conflicts. In the last analysis, the Council, the United Nations as a whole and the Member States that constitute it will be judged in terms of their willingness to make a real difference in the lives of the people who need our help most. Our actions must be concrete, and we must make flexible and pragmatic use of the tools at our disposal. The Council can continue to rely on Canada's support in overcoming these difficulties.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We hail your wisdom and stewardship. At the same time, I would like to express the deepest appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Peru. Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Jan Egeland, not only for his briefing today, but also for the work that he accomplished during his tenure in general and during the humanitarian crisis that my country, Lebanon, witnessed last summer. I salute him and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Between 12 July and 14 August 2006, Lebanon was the target of a ferocious Israeli aggression, considered disproportionate by international legal standards as well as by the international community. The scope and the scale of the destruction were massive: 1,191 civilians were killed and more than 4,000 were injured. Approximately 900,000 people — one quarter of the Lebanese population — were displaced; many of them are still homeless. Buildings and homes were flattened to the ground.

In 34 days, the Israeli forces carried out a massive military campaign. The Israeli air force flew more than 12,000 combat missions, the navy fired 2,500 shells and the army fired more than 100,000 shells. The Israeli army pursued an indiscriminate and deliberate policy of targeting civilians, whether they were hiding in shelters, fleeing in convoys from the area of attack or lying wounded in ambulances and medical facilities. No measures were taken to ensure that the targets of the attacks had no military character. No time was given to the victims to flee, and when time was given, the fleeing civilians were themselves the targets of violent and inhuman attacks.

As if all these massacres were not enough; as if the state of panic and fear experienced by the entire Lebanese population, from north to south and from east to west, were insufficient; and as if the attacks against the Lebanese infrastructure, which caused billions of dollars in losses, were inadequate, the Israeli forces prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching large parts of south Lebanon. In a number of instances in which they did allow such assistance, the forces

attacked the aid convoys either directly or indirectly. The Israeli forces even attacked United Nations positions and bases. At the Khiam base of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, for example, four United Nations observers lost their lives as a result of a deliberately planned attack.

We all remember how a naval blockade and a land blockade were imposed on Lebanon and how the Israeli air force managed to impose a curfew on the country, with countless raids that endangered the humanitarian situation of all Lebanese. To this day, we are still dealing with the lethal effects of the cluster munitions, 90 per cent of which were fired by Israel in the last 72 hours of the aggression. There were 1,159,200 individual bombs dispersed over south Lebanon, concentrated in developed areas and agricultural lands, all of which have since become desolate.

Impunity cannot be tolerated. The twisting of reality and blatant violations of international humanitarian law cannot be accepted. The failure of the Security Council to take responsible action to ensure access to Lebanese civilians and to protect humanitarian convoys over a three-week period should not be repeated. The Security Council has the responsibility to act swiftly to protect civilians.

In its presidential statement of 20 December 2002, the Security Council recognized that secure humanitarian access and the clear separation of civilians and combatants should be ensured in armed conflicts. In resolution 1674 (2006), adopted on 28 April, the Security Council recalled that deliberately targeting civilians and other protected persons in situations of armed conflict is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, and the Council asked all parties immediately to put an end to such practices.

The high-level Commission of Inquiry, created pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-2/1, of 11 August 2006, established Israel's responsibility for the gross violations of international humanitarian law committed during its military attacks on Lebanon. It has proved beyond doubt that Israel's claims that it took precautions to protect civilian lives in the conflict were untrue.

In order to prevent similar events in the future, whether in the region or in other parts of the world, the forthcoming report concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflict should include a clear and extensive depiction of the suffering endured by the Lebanese civilian population caused by the Israeli attacks this past summer. Although Lebanon expresses the utmost appreciation for all the humanitarian aid and support that it has received from all nations of the world and from the United Nations, it endured extremely harsh circumstances when the ceasefire was constantly delayed, which allowed Israel to continue its violent attacks.

Lebanon calls on the Security Council to deploy more efforts in the future to seek a durable and sustainable peaceful solution to armed conflict in the world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe (Myanmar): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Council for this month. I would also like to thank you for having convened this open debate.

I wish to thank Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for having updated the Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to him for his leadership and dedication in discharging his important task. His contributions, and the noble mission that he has ably carried out, will be remembered by the international community.

Armed conflicts breed a cycle of violence and bring untold suffering to innocent civilians. In the years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1296 (2000), the international community has faced numerous challenges in providing security for and ensuring the well-being of civilian populations. As Under-Secretary-General Egeland has pointed out, success depends on united action taken by all members.

Armed conflicts, and the great harm they do to civilians, are exacerbated by the easy availability of illicit small arms and light weapons. In addition, terrorism also causes great suffering to the civilian population. The international community must effectively address these serious challenges. Myanmar joins other members of the international community in condemning all such acts. We fully sympathize with the victims of armed conflict in various parts of the

world, as we ourselves endured the bitter experience of insurgent groups committing atrocities against the civilian population. We fully agree that the protection of civilians must be depoliticized and must transcend singular interests so as to become a core principle of humanity for all civilizations.

The most efficient way to protect civilians in armed conflict is to resolve the root causes and bring armed conflicts to an end. Soon after regaining independence in 1948, Myanmar had to face an insurgency that lasted for over 40 years. Because of the national reconciliation efforts of the Government, 17 of 18 insurgent groups have returned to the legal fold and are now working together with the Government for the development of their respective regions. The insurgency that had plagued the country has come to a virtual end. There now remain a faction of one insurgent group, the Karen National Union (KNU), and remnants of armed narcotraffickers, who are now confined to small enclaves in the border areas. Although their ranks have greatly diminished and they currently control little or no territory, they continue to target civilians and commit acts of terrorism.

In order to protect the civilian population, the Government is conducting counter-insurgency operations against those elements of the KNU and the remnants of narcotrafficking armed groups that are conducting terrorist activities against the civilians.

With regard to allegations that civilians suffer from the repercussions of counter-insurgency operations, we took the members of the diplomatic corps and the United Nations country team to those areas. We also invited Under-Secretary-General Gambari to those areas, so that he could personally witness the actual situation.

Let me conclude by expressing our strong conviction that only through a comprehensive approach to promote economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development and national reconciliation will we be able to put an end to armed conflicts — which, in our view, is the best way to protect civilians. To that end, our Government has, to date, spent over 81 billion kyats and some $550 million to develop the border areas, where most of our ethnic nationalities reside. The Myanmar Government will do its national duty to protect its citizens and bring peace, stability and prosperity to the country.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Egeland to respond to the observations made and questions posed.

Mr. Egeland: This has been another day of sitting and listening to many good interventions and proposals and, first and foremost, the expressions of support of Security Council members for what we are trying to do to protect civilians.

Certainly the good news is that that there are fewer conflicts and we are probably doing better humanitarian work, better peacekeeping work and better good offices mediation work in the United Nations than ever before. We are making progress overall. The bad news is that the armed men in the remaining armed conflicts, wars and internal strife are more ruthless than ever. They are better armed than ever, and their whole purpose seems to be to make the situation as bad as possible for the defenceless civilian population. So in 2007 we will really be back to the darkest ages in terms of not protecting civilian populations. And it is really a question of crimes against humanity and war crimes — in certain cases amounting to genocide. I will on my many missions never forget the abused women of eastern Congo, the kidnapped children of northern Uganda, the camp population in Darfur or the relatives of the killed civilians in Iraq and the Palestinian areas and elsewhere.

There is, of course, one major remedy to this situation, and that is united action, as so many have stated today — united action by all internal actors, their Governments, civil society and all military and armed groups, as well as united international action.

When I started my work, the worst cases of abuses of civilian populations were found in pockets of southern Sudan, in eastern Congo, in northern Uganda and in Liberia. In all of those cases, we have made progress. But the situation has become worse in other areas. In those other areas, including Darfur, Gaza and Iraq, there has not been any united action, at either the national or the international level, to put an end to the suffering of the civilian population. Only through re-achieving unity of purpose and unity of action will we be able to make progress on these issues.

I have been heartened to see growing support for the agenda of the protection of civilians. There are virtually hundreds, if not thousands, of civil society groups and non-governmental organizations following

this, in the east, in the west, in the north and in the south. I have been heartened to see that an overwhelming majority of Member States now believe that this is the core of what the United Nations is all about.

As this is my swan song, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council for your kind words. I should like to thank the secretariat of the Security Council for always helping us. I should like thank my staff, which has been writing all of these long drafts for me to be presented here. I should like also to thank the non-governmental organizations, the United Nations agencies and all of the partners that have developed the agenda for the protection of civilians and have made humanitarian work more effective in these last, long and tough but very rewarding years.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Egeland for his clarifications.

We would like once again to express our appreciation to Mr. Egeland and to wish him every success.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5578

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5578th meeting

Wednesday, 6 December 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Gallardo
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Mlynár
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-64384 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now proceed to the consideration of its annual report to the General Assembly, for the period from 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006.

The introduction to the draft report was prepared by the delegation of France and the factual contents were prepared by the Secretariat. I should like to express my appreciation to the delegation of France and to the Secretariat for the work they have undertaken in preparing their respective contributions.

I should like to point out that the format of the draft report now before us corresponds to the provisions initially set out in the note by the President of 22 May 2002 (S/2002/199) and now incorporated in the note by the President of 19 July 2006 (S/2006/507).

I now call on Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to make an explanatory statement.

Mr. Kalomoh (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs): I have the great pleasure to present the draft annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006, to be submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 3, and Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations. The factual information contained in the draft report before the Council was prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the provisions of the note by the President of the Security Council of 22 May 2002, contained in document S/2002/199, and now incorporated in the note by the President of 19 July 2006, contained in document S/2006/507.

The draft report before the Council provides a guide to the activities of the Council in a concise and comprehensive manner. Of particular interest is the introduction to the report, which was prepared by the delegation of France. The Secretariat wishes to express its appreciation for the introduction by the delegation of France.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that the draft report is adopted by the Council?

There being no objection, it is so decided.

This decision will be reflected in a note by the President of the Security Council to be issued as document S/2006/942.

The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5579

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5579th meeting

Wednesday, 6 December 2006, 4 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Christenson
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kawakami
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Russian Federation	Mr. Liplinskiy
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hoare
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-64481 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Somalia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohamed (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/940, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Republic of Tanzania, Ghana, the Congo and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1725 (2006).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): The United States is pleased to co-sponsor this resolution on Somalia with all of our African colleagues on the Security Council.

In Somalia, the security situation is deteriorating and tensions continue to run high, which is of deep concern to the United States. Like many other Member States, we are concerned about the prospects for a wider regional conflict. However, the United States views the deployment of a regional force to Somalia as a key element in preventing conflict.

Through the International Somalia Contact Group, the United States is committed to working with our international partners to encourage dialogue among Somali parties. Despite these efforts and the 22 June Khartoum Declaration between the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), the situation in Somalia has not improved.

Although both parties have violated the terms of the Khartoum Declaration, the UIC has done so through concrete military expansion. It has sought to further destabilize the Horn of Africa region through irredentist claims on the Somali-populated regions of neighbouring States and support for insurgent groups in Ethiopia.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union have put forth a proposal aimed at helping to restore stability in Somalia through deployment of a security, training and protection mission. The primary purpose of that deployment is to help stabilize Somalia by providing security in Baidoa, and protection and training for the TFI, not to engage in offensive actions against the UIC.

The United States strongly believes that a sustainable solution in Somalia should be based on credible dialogue between the TFI and the UIC, and we continue to work with our African and other partners towards that end. The continued military expansion by the UIC, however, has not helped to promote dialogue and, in fact, has created the need for deployment of a regional force to stabilize the situation inside Somalia.

The United States supports that regional proposal and views the deployment of the IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM) as a critical element to

help resume credible dialogue between the TFI and UIC. It will also help to create the conditions for Ethiopian and Eritrean disengagement from Somalia.

The deployment of IGASOM is only one of the critical elements, however, of what must be a comprehensive plan to reach a durable solution in Somalia. A political settlement is needed, and dialogue towards it must resume. A security protocol, including a verifiable ceasefire and military disengagement, is the next step towards a longer-term solution. The international community must be united in its efforts to bring the parties back to that dialogue.

The United States welcomes the recommendations of the United Nations Somalia Monitoring Group regarding ways to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the United Nations arms embargo on Somalia. We continue to work with our partners in the Security Council on these and many other issues as we seek a solution to the Somali crisis.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the Security Council's adoption today of this resolution, which supports the efforts under way for quite some time now by the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to bring peace back to Somalia. For years now, that country has felt abandoned by the international community. Last week again, in Abuja, the Prime Minister of Somalia asked his peers, the African leaders, to do everything in their power to ensure that the Council would adopt the draft resolution being negotiated at that time in New York.

I welcome the fact that the Council has adopted this text unanimously. In particular, I am thankful to the delegation of the United States of America, which joined the three African countries members of the Council in sponsoring the text, so important for Africa.

With the adoption of this text, IGAD will be in a position to deploy a training and protection force, whose purpose has been and remains to restore peace in Somalia, to assist in the dialogue among all parties and to support commitments already undertaken, particularly in the Khartoum talks. As everyone knows, the African Union recognizes the transitional federal institutions, but it encourages dialogue between those institutions and the Union of Islamic Courts.

Finally, we invite all States, in particular neighbouring countries, to strictly respect this resolution. In this regard, respect for the arms embargo constitutes significant proof of their commitment to the restoration of peace in Somalia.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We too want to thank the United States for joining us in sponsoring this resolution and for contributing to its support.

It is not a perfect resolution. It does not offer all the answers to the challenges facing Somalia. It is, however, a step in the right direction — a step that needed to be taken. It encourages all of Somalia's parties to work together towards the restoration of peace and security in Somalia. This is as it ought to be. Furthermore, the resolution responds, to a degree, to the concerns raised by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union.

It is clear that both IGAD and the African Union will continue to need the support not only of this Council, but also of the international community in supporting Somalia as it walks towards this tenuous road to peace and stability. We are glad to associate ourselves with the resolution and we thank the Council for having adopted it.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I will now speak in my national capacity in explanation of vote.

The State of Qatar has voted in favour of the resolution out of our belief in the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia, as well as its political independence and the unity of its territory. In the consultations that were held over the resolution, we affirmed our readiness to undertake any measures as long as they will genuinely contribute to easing the intensity of the crisis in Somalia.

Therefore, we have reaffirmed the need to continue to deal with the situation in Somalia cautiously and without rushing to any preconceived judgement. Our main purpose is to spread peace and stability in Somalia and to entrench a cooperative and comprehensive national rule.

Our support for the resolution stems from our understanding that it aims to encourage all Somali parties to reach a peaceful political settlement through a comprehensive dialogue among all groups. This would accomplish the hoped-for stability. It is important that this resolution not have a negative impact; it must not be construed as being directed at

one party at the expense of another. This must be kept in mind when the resolution is implemented.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Security Council has thus concluded present stage of its consideration of the item on agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matte

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5580

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5580th meeting

Wednesday, 6 December 2006, 4.35 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Christensen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kawakami
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Russian Federation	Mr. Leplinskiy
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-64492 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in which she requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Booto (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council welcomes the announcement by the Supreme Court of Justice on 27 November of the formal results of the second round of the presidential election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"The Security Council congratulates President Joseph Kabila on his election and commends once again the Congolese people, whose determination and sense of civic responsibility enabled the first democratic elections to be held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in more than 40 years.

"The Security Council welcomes Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba's commitment, in his statement on 28 November 2006, to continue to participate actively in Congolese politics within the framework of the institutions of the Republic.

"The Security Council looks forward to the completion of the electoral process, and reiterates the need for all political parties to act responsibly after the elections within the framework of democratic institutions and the rule of law. The Security Council attaches great importance to the fact that the democratically elected Government should work side by side with all Congolese people and political actors to address the many reconstruction and security challenges facing the country and ensure the long-term peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"The Security Council expresses its sincere appreciation for the central role played by the Independent Electoral Commission and the Congolese National Police in, respectively, organizing the elections and providing security during the electoral process. It commends the invaluable support provided for the holding of the elections by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the EUFOR operation and by all the regional and international partners, in particular the African Union, South Africa and the European Union. The Security Council also recalls the vital roles that the International Committee of Eminent Persons and the International Committee in Support of the Transition (ICST) have been playing throughout the electoral process.

"The Security Council pays tribute to the donor community for the assistance they have provided to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular to the electoral process, and encourages the international community as a whole to continue to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the process of peace consolidation, reconstruction and recovery.

"The Security Council expresses its serious concern at the recent hostilities launched by non-integrated army units in Sake, in the North Kivu province, and at the impact that these actions have had on the civilian population including women, children and the elderly. It calls on these units to cease their hostilities, return without delay to their initial positions and submit themselves to the army integration or demobilization processes.

"The Security Council encourages MONUC, in accordance with its mandate, to continue to address with determination such security challenges, and supports the steps it has taken recently in this regard, particularly in the district of Ituri and the North Kivu province."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2006/50.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5581

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5581st meeting

Thursday, 7 December 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan (S/2006/935)

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06-64703 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan (S/2006/935)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Canada, Finland, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway and Pakistan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/935, containing the report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan and head of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): This morning, it is my great pleasure to report to the Security Council on the findings of the mission that visited Afghanistan from 11 to 16 November 2006, in which I had the privilege of serving as team leader.

The Security Council mission to Afghanistan was the second carried out since 2002 in support of the Afghan people. The mission noted significant efforts undertaken by Afghans and the international community during the past four years to achieve national reconciliation and promote democratic institutions, which the Bonn Agreement had envisaged. The Bonn Agreement was successfully concluded one year ago, in December 2005, with the opening of a democratically elected National Assembly. In all 34 provinces, there are now functioning provincial councils.

Afghanistan is set to enjoy continuing high rates of economic growth and increasing per capita income, expanding trade and investment with regional partners, significant infrastructure projects in place, including roads and power generation facilities, and programmes in the fields of education, rural development and the development of new Afghan security institutions. The Afghanistan Compact — a new five-year blueprint for cooperation between the international community and the Government of Afghanistan — was launched in January this year at the London Conference, with the aim of laying firmer groundwork to ensure that Afghanistan would embark on a period of genuine stability and development. Those are positive achievements and developments, and they merit high praise.

However, progress in 2006 towards realizing the vision set out in the Afghanistan Compact has not been as smooth or rapid as had been hoped, owing to a number of reasons. Among them, uneven efforts to improve governance and establish the rule of law, the growing Taliban-led insurgency and widespread insecurity in the south and east of the country, an upsurge in illegal drug production and trafficking, and pervasive corruption in the governing systems were noted in the briefings that the Council mission received on the ground. Those factors, combined with the still very fragile State institutions, feed into the disappointment and disillusionment of Afghans and are beginning to test the confidence of the Afghan public in its nascent institutions and processes. The mission also noted with grave concern that growing insecurity in parts of the south and south-east was disrupting rehabilitation and reconstruction work by Afghans, the United Nations and other international partners.

It was against that background that our mission took place. The mission recognized that Afghanistan had to start its reconciliation and reconstruction effort not just from the zero point, but further below, from deep minuses, after decades of conflict. In such

circumstances, the time frame required and the patience needed for national healing and readjustment and for the march forward will be different from the ordinary. As the history and the experiences of nations have taught us, such a process cannot be completed in a short period of time or in linear progression. There are bound to be some zigzags and ups and downs.

However, few can deny that Afghanistan is now at a crossroads. The country is set to move forward with promises of reconstruction and development based on democratic institutions. But at the same time it is also being confronted, in its fragility, with a host of challenges and difficulties, including those related to security. No one can guarantee that, without determined efforts on the part of Afghanistan and sustained support over the long haul from the international community, the country will not slide towards broader conflict once again.

The primary messages that the Council mission wished to stress, therefore, were essentially twofold: first, that the firm and unyielding commitment of the international community in support of the Government and the people of Afghanistan and their country's transition was unwavering; and second, that the Afghanistan Compact, which is owned and led by Afghans, remains the central strategic framework for cooperation between the Afghan Government and the international community. The Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, must ensure its steady and faithful implementation.

The report of the mission is before members. It describes its findings in some detail and, on the basis of those findings, presents several recommendations. I already had an opportunity, in a public meeting on 22 November (S/PV.5570), to make remarks on the activities and some of the findings of the mission. What I intend to do here is to provide a brief explanation of the situation that the mission encountered and then to give a summary of its recommendations.

First is a matter of great concern: the security situation. Security was the dominant concern in Afghanistan. Many of the mission's interlocutors expressed apprehension about the rise in violence in parts of the country. The insurgency appeared to be more or less confined to one third of the country. However, the security situation in general remained precarious throughout the country.

After a worrying upsurge in the number of security-related incidents throughout spring and summer this year, some interlocutors said there were signs that insurgent- and terrorist-related violence might be subsiding after October. There were, however, more cautious views on that prognosis.

The growth of the Taliban-led insurgency has been fed in part by the failure of the Government and the international community to provide basic services, credible governance and security in many urban centres and rural communities. Highlighted in that connection were the weakness of the incipient Afghan National Police, a lack of the rule of law and pervasive corruption. It was also alleged that the narcotics industry and the money it generates play an important part in feeding the insurgency forces.

Many expressed frustration about the current state of the Afghan National Police. Proposals had been made to the international community to support police expansion to meet the latest challenges of the insurgency and the deteriorating security in some regions. The mission was briefed on the importance of strong recruitment, vetting and monitoring procedures for the new Afghan National Auxiliary Police.

The mission paid tribute to the leading role that the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had assumed in contributing to security in support of the Afghan Government. It also took note of ISAF's continuing need for adequate forces and resources. The Afghan side also noted that, despite unfortunate incidents such as those resulting in civilian casualties, there was still overwhelming support for the presence of international security forces. Better coordination between the international forces and the Afghan Government was called for by Afghan interlocutors.

Next is the issue of impunity and corruption. Throughout the mission, interlocutors cited corruption and the perpetuation of a culture of impunity as the root causes of popular Afghan disaffection and unease. It was pointed out that widespread corruption in law enforcement and in judicial institutions was central to the population's decreasing trust in the Government. An anti-corruption commission had been established two months earlier and was working to identify the nature and the scope of the problem. Solutions,

however, remained elusive. Support and expertise would be required from Afghanistan's international partners in this regard.

It was also pointed out that the continued tolerance of positions of authority given to the former commanders and warlords was contributing to instability. Government efforts to diminish the authority of those figures would also require international support. The Government's strategy to disband illegally armed groups was considered a key vehicle for dismantling the power base of those commanders.

The next issue to which I would like to refer is governance. Afghanistan was in desperate need of training of professionals. The Afghan leadership identified the restructuring of the civil service and the strengthening of its capacity as the top priority for Afghanistan and its international partners. A premium was placed on enhancing human capital at all levels as a precondition for an effective public sector and for sustained progress towards development goals.

On human rights and the protection of civilians, Afghan and international interlocutors expressed concern about the increase in human rights violations and the failure to ensure the protection of civilians — including in the context of the attacking and burning of schools — the Government's failure to uphold equal rights in law and the restrictions on public discourse. The mission took note of their concern that the space made for human rights and gender equality, which had opened following the ousting of the Taliban in 2001, had recently begun to close.

The mission participated in the third session of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). The JCMB had demonstrated a growing capacity to monitor progress and address bottlenecks hindering the implementation of Compact benchmarks. While the efforts of the JCMB should be commended, in order for the Compact to deliver visible change to the Afghan people, Government-led coordination efforts would need to be strengthened and integrated under the overall National Development Strategy.

Pervasive unemployment, particularly among the young, is one of the central factors contributing to instability in the country. Attracting private sector investors is important, but the lack of security deterred those investments that could generate jobs.

Insecurity, ongoing drought, flooding and combat operations have all combined to displace larger population groups inside Afghanistan this year, generating fresh vulnerabilities and new humanitarian needs. In this regard, increased efforts are needed to ensure the delivery of assistance to people living in more remote areas of Afghanistan.

I would like briefly to refer to the issue of counter-narcotics efforts. Afghanistan's burgeoning narco-economy was identified by the vast majority of the mission's interlocutors as a primary threat to stability. It was described as a cancer which would spread and kill Afghan society over the long term. The mission was informed that in 2006, opium poppy cultivation represented 60 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. The importance of much more energetic measures and of regional and international cooperation in combating drug trafficking was underscored.

With regard to regional cooperation to address the many problems, it is clear that such cooperation is of the utmost importance in resolving Afghanistan's challenges, since issues of security have regional as well as internal dimensions. Many interlocutors stressed that the existence of sanctuaries in Pakistan for insurgent groups must be addressed by law enforcement and other means. The mission was briefed by the Afghan side about the negative impact on border security that could result from the recent peace deal in North Waziristan, Pakistan.

For its part, the Pakistani side, pointing out its burden of accepting a large number of refugees, stressed that a stable Afghanistan was essential for Pakistan's security. It said that Pakistan was doing its best to improve the security in the border area, having suffered casualties in the operations, while admitting the difficulty of ensuring effective control over the long border, which has many crossing points. It was pointed out that cooperation among Pakistan, Afghanistan and international forces was ongoing at various levels, including through the Tripartite Commission. The ISAF commander in Kabul, for his part, told the mission that he appreciated the emerging tripartite cooperation. As regards the peace deal in North Waziristan, the Pakistani side pointed out that the assertion that the peace deal has resulted in an increase in incidents did not reflect the facts. The mission encouraged Pakistan to monitor the North Waziristan agreement with a view to ensuring that the

cross-border impact of that or any future agreement is positive for security and stability.

The mission was encouraged by the efforts of the Afghan and Pakistani leaders to promote mutual cooperation and trust, including through people-to-people contact. The mission was briefed on plans to hold cross-border jirgas on security.

Finally, Afghan interlocutors strongly praised the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Donors similarly welcomed the expanded UNAMA presence, describing it as a huge plus. The mission acknowledged the voices calling for UNAMA to play greater coordination role between them and the military.

Now, I should like to turn briefly to the key findings of the mission.

First, the spread of insurgent and terrorist activity by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, coupled with corruption and failures of governance, collectively pose a grave threat to nation-building. To overcome those challenges, the Afghan Government and the international community have established a sound strategy, including, in particular, the Afghanistan Compact. The Council will need to ensure that this shared strategy remains firm and enduring.

The Afghanistan Compact is the best framework for cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community and should be moved forward to serious action under the overall guidance of the JCMB. The Afghan Government should transform its ownership into further action, with a view to achieving the benchmarks set out in the Compact. The international community, for its part, should provide additional support on an ongoing basis, both for quick gains and for sustained progress.

Secondly, with regard to international military forces, NATO and other countries are urged to maintain and increase their commitment to ISAF to meet the challenge of the current security environment in Afghanistan. It is important to establish a strong and sustainable Afghan national army and a trusted and effective national police force. With regard to the establishment of the police force, donors and the Afghan Government should redouble their collective efforts. The international community should also revitalize its support for the Afghan Government's efforts to disband illegally armed groups.

On the rule of law and good governance, the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of its international partners, should, as a matter of the highest priority, establish the rule of law and good governance throughout the country. Immediate steps must be taken to strengthen justice sector institutions and provincial governments, including through the replacement of corrupt officials and local power brokers.

The Government and the international community should sharpen their focus on human rights and the protection of civilians. The Government is also encouraged to reinforce its commitment to human rights and reconciliation and increase support for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the implementation of the Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Action Plan, as required by the Compact. The Government and donors should empower women as a true cross-cutting priority.

Next, with regard to the coordination and delivery of humanitarian and development assistance, such assistance should, wherever possible, be delivered by skilled and experienced civilian actors, and the capacity for civilian coordination of humanitarian assistance should be strengthened in 2007. At the same time, given the prevailing circumstances in Afghanistan, assistance will need to be provided by those best placed to deliver it. The focus should be to extend development to the provinces, strengthen accountability at the community level, and achieve tangible and visible results. The JCMB coordination mechanism should be further improved and focused on delivery.

In the area of counter-narcotics, the Government and the international community should do much more to strengthen their efforts to fight this scourge by helping diversify means of livelihood, so that rural communities can move away from the illegal cultivation of the opium poppy and pursue legitimate economic opportunities. The Government, with support from the international community, should step up activities aimed at the arrest and prosecution of major drug traffickers, regardless of their position or status.

With respect to regional cooperation, fostering trust and cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbouring and regional partners is of crucial

importance for peace, security and development in the region. The mission welcomes the efforts made by the Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan to fight terrorism and to reinforce border security, and it urges both Governments to intensify dialogue and collaboration. The mission looks forward to the outcome of plans by the two countries to hold cross-border jirgas to improve security and stability, on the basis of better understanding and mutual trust.

The list established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) should continue to be updated as necessary and on the basis of the most current information, as envisaged by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to UNAMA, the United Nations should continue to play a central and impartial role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General is encouraged to consider measures to promote UNAMA's coordination role, at both the capital and country levels, and to make recommendations in his next report.

Finally, the mission recognizes the extremely difficult and stressful circumstances under which UNAMA and the rest of the United Nations family are operating in Afghanistan. Acknowledging their dedication and commitment, the mission report concludes by calling on Member States to provide all necessary support to allow the United Nations to carry out its mandate in such a challenging environment.

I will conclude my remarks on behalf of the Council mission by expressing its deep appreciation to the Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan, to the Commander of ISAF and its contributing countries, to UNAMA and the country team, to non-governmental and civil society organizations active in the country, and to all other interlocutors for their support and cooperation and for the opportunities for discussion that the mission was provided during the course of its visit.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): I would like first of all to thank Ambassador Oshima for his excellent leadership of the Security Council's mission to Afghanistan last month and for his report to the Council. Denmark fully supports the report and its recommendations. I would, however, like to make a few comments and observations in my national capacity.

The serious challenges and obstacles facing Afghanistan which are detailed in the report should not be underestimated. We believe that the overall process that began with the Bonn Agreement and now continues under the Afghanistan Compact is largely on track and that the right strategies are in place. But a continued strong and long-term commitment to see them through — on the part of both the Afghan Government and the international community — remains absolutely essential.

Considerable progress has been achieved, including the establishment of representative political institutions, the enhanced capacity of the security sector and improvements in human rights, including women's rights and media freedom. But in spite of that progress, Afghanistan is facing a number of intractable problems.

The persistent threat to security posed by armed groups such as the Taliban throughout large parts of the country, the reign of drug lords and other criminal elements, the weak central Government presence and service delivery outside Kabul, and the continued high levels of corruption and impunity among key public officials have undermined the Afghan people's trust in their own Government and triggered a vicious circle in which the lack of development and productive employment opportunities feeds insecurity, and vice versa.

The only way to break this cycle is to continue to do what the Afghan Government, the international community and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) are already doing, that is, to endeavour to improve the Government's institutional capacity for service delivery throughout Afghanistan, including agricultural and rural infrastructure support for viable alternatives to poppy cultivation; strengthen accountability and the rule of law by bringing corrupt officials to justice and promote further respect for human rights, including women's rights, which are currently under increasing attack; and build up the capacity of the Afghan army and police force, ensuring full coordination and cooperation between the Afghan security structures and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

I would in this regard particularly like to emphasize the need for improved aid coordination so as to get more out of the limited resources available. We believe that UNAMA's coordination role should be

strengthened. It is particularly important to ensure that the increasing amount of aid provided through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams is made fully accountable and aligned with the development priorities in the Afghanistan Compact.

Another key area in which urgent action is needed is the implementation of the Government's action plan for transitional justice. The fact that former warlords and others who have committed massive human rights violations continue to serve in public office is clearly perpetuating the culture of impunity and undermining the public's trust in the rule of law.

Finally, we would like to stress the importance of regional cooperation, including cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, on improving security in the border region. The current insurgency in Afghanistan cannot be brought to a halt as long as sanctuaries exist for the insurgents across the country's borders. We therefore welcome Pakistan's determination, stated during the mission's visit to Islamabad, to prevent Talibanization and terrorism and to reinforce border security. We welcome the fact that preparations for the proposed cross-border jirgas, which are part of the strategy to counter that threat, are currently being discussed at the highest level.

Afghanistan has travelled a long way in the past five years. With continued efforts to overcome the current challenges, we hope that, in another five years, the Afghan people will be able to enjoy increased stability, prosperity and democracy.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tom Koenigs and to all the staff of UNAMA for the sterling job that they are doing in Afghanistan, often at great personal risk.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Oshima for his excellent leadership of the mission to Afghanistan and, indeed, for the work of the Japanese Mission here in leading work on this subject in the Council.

The report of the mission is a comprehensive assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, and Ambassador Oshima's briefing today was similarly thorough and thought-provoking. My thanks go also to Special Representative Koenigs and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for the job they do day by day in Afghanistan. And I align myself with the statement to be made in due course by the Ambassador of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The United Kingdom is committed to assisting Afghanistan in the long term. Tony Blair in Kabul as recently as 20 November stressed the importance to the international community of delivering a secure, stable Afghanistan. The United Kingdom is a major contributor to the international effort in Afghanistan, through NATO, the European Union and in our bilateral programme. And we have led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) military operation through this particularly challenging year. Like others around the table, we are also heading up one of the provincial reconstruction teams. There is one in Helmand.

Security, particularly in the south, is proving challenging. The Taliban's direct offensive on ISAF this summer was defeated, but we can expect continuing disruption from anti-Government elements. We believe neither the Taliban nor other illegal armed groups currently pose a credible threat to the overall stability of Afghanistan, but they can seriously disrupt the work of improving the quality of life of the Afghan people. Our role is to support President Karzai in his Government's effort to extend security and stability throughout the country and to improve development prospects. So, we welcome the continued commitment to Afghan security shown at NATO's Riga summit, but there are still some capability gaps, as Ambassador Oshima recalled today. But allies are working to ensure that these are filled. Equally, it is important to continue the development of Afghan security forces, the indigenous capability, including the Afghan National Police.

We need to accelerate work to establish the rule of law. As Ambassador Oshima noted earlier, capacity-building here is a critical challenge. Failure to consolidate gains made in this area will undermine popular support for the wider reform programme. We must use the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan to support police salaries and other rule of law-related capacity-building.

Drugs continue to remain, in our view, the gravest threat to the long-term security, development and effective governance of Afghanistan. The Afghan Government's national drug control strategy, with its four priorities — targeting the trafficker, strengthening

livelihoods, reducing demand and developing effective institutions — seem to us the right approach. That means that we need increased and sustained assistance, including to the Afghan Counter Narcotics Trust Fund, and we should provide international mentors for the counter-narcotics police of Afghanistan. This is vital if we are to ensure that the progress to date is not undermined.

It is important, generally, that we all look at what more we can do to support international objectives in Afghanistan. An EU fact-finding mission is in Afghanistan now, looking at how the European Union can further assist in developing policing and related rule-of-law issues, including counter-narcotics. We hope that this will lead to the deployment of new EU assets in the new year.

The position of women in Afghanistan is an area where we have seen important progress since 2001, from an abysmal start, it has to be said, but some progress, not least in the level of representation in the National Assembly and in an increase in access to education. There are still, of course, problems from those years when girls were not allowed to have any education. There is clearly, therefore, much more to be done to consolidate education for those now coming through and for those who missed it previously. So, we would strongly urge the Government to reconsider any suggestions to abolish the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In our view, the Ministry plays an integral role in ensuring the full participation of women in all aspects of peace consolidation and peacebuilding in Afghanistan.

We cannot afford to lose momentum. It is vital that the Afghanistan Compact Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) gives direction and impetus to the programmes set out in the Compact, including on institutional capacity-building and counter-narcotics. So, we are pleased to see that the Council's report notes that the JCMB capability is developing. It was welcome that the mission participated in one of their sessions in Kabul.

Finally, I would like to underline British support for the report's call for enhanced regional cooperation. This is vital, in particular, for Afghan and Pakistan governmental contribution — that they should work together to counter the common Taliban threat. So, the plans for the cross-border jirgas are particularly welcome.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru)(*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to express the gratitude of the delegation of Peru for the work done by the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, led by the Ambassador of Japan, Mr. Kenzo Oshima, and I would like to thank him for the report he has given us this morning.

We believe that the work that was done by the mission, which is condensed in the report he presented to us, is useful in order to understand the situation on the ground. In this way, the Security Council has news of the process in Afghanistan, which is necessary in order to support the efforts of the Government and people of Afghanistan to build a democratic and viable State, one which is fully integrated in its region and in the international system.

The report on the Security Council's mission acknowledges a few encouraging advances in infrastructure, true economic and trade progress, as well as in basic social services. However, it also confirms that the situation is basically fragile in Afghanistan as this year comes to an end. Despite the optimism generated by the adoption of the Compact last January, the reality presents a picture where the political and social order faces serious threats that endanger what has been achieved until now.

The Afghan authorities have made efforts in order to find a way out of the crisis. However, as the report says, these efforts until now have been insufficient in consolidating the rule of law or establishing firm governance with prospects of viable economic sustainability. There are many problems that are facing Afghanistan and endangering its viability as an emerging nation, a nation integrated constructively within the region.

The difficult transition in this country does not only generate a situation of crisis within its territory but also raises the risk of instability at the regional level. The intensification of the extremist insurgency, led by the Taliban, and the increasing insecurity in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan endanger the new institutions in this country. Narco-trafficking, corruption and crime in general provide fertile ground for the activities of illegal armed groups. I am not going to repeat figures that we find in the mission's report, in the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and in other international studies with which we are all familiar.

This is in contrast to four years of efforts at the United Nations and in the international community to bring stability to that country. It is enough to point out that it is very disturbing to see that opium cultivation represents 60 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Afghanistan. No State can be in a position to function in a stable manner when it must face such a huge challenge.

As we have seen in othe regions of the world, crime, corruption and drug trafficking are activities that go hand in hand. When we fail to halt them in time with coherent policies, they seriously affect security, the development of democratic institutions, economic reconstruction, the rule of law and human rights.

Measures designed to improve civil security are necessary but insufficient conditions. It is critical for that country to find alternative modes of legal economic activity if it is to be sustainable as a State. Social indicators reveal high rates of illiteracy and low rates of human development, which generate structural underdevelopment that hampers reconstruction in that country. In that context, I stress the importance of improved training of human resources in Afghanistan.

Development assistance is absolutely crucial. In item 41, the mission's report refers to that aspect in recommending that emphasis be placed on the development of the provinces and the implementation of employment-generating programmes, given that the lack of job opportunities contributes significantly to the recruitment of insurgents and exacerbates poverty and the conditions that have fuelled drug trafficking and corruption.

Lastly, we join the appeal to the international community to step up its efforts to identify measures to stabilize Afghanistan, improve security conditions there, strengthen and define the institutional framework, and lay the foundations of sustainable economic growth based on productive and viable activities.

Ms. Sanders (United States of America): The United States expresses its appreciation to Ambassador Oshima, the Japanese mission and the Secretariat for this comprehensive report and for all the work that went into planning and undertaking this valuable mission.

We applaud the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for their hard and difficult work. We are pleased that the international community solidly supports Afghanistan and its democratic transition. The United States commends the extraordinary work of the members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and NATO. Despite many challenges, their contributions have improved security, democracy and governance in Afghanistan, added to its economic and social development, as well as assisted in counter-narcotics and regional stabilization efforts.

The recent trip of the Security Council clearly demonstrated that the international community's support will not diminish. We look forward to working with the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to help bring about security and stability in Afghanistan, including through continuing implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. We affirm our commitment to working with the Government of Afghanistan, ISAF partners and the United Nations towards security, democracy and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Security Council's successful mission to Afghanistan. The report before us contains many important ideas and recommendations. We believe that it will be very helpful to the Council in addressing the issue of Afghanistan in its next phase.

I thank Ambassador Oshima and the Japanese delegation for their initiative and active efforts to make the mission possible and successful.

I should like to take this opportunity to stress three points.

First, security and stability remain the top priority for Afghanistan and should be addressed with enhanced effort. China supports the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to combat terrorist and extremist activities and to maintain national security and stability. The international community should provide more resources to help Afghanistan to strengthen its military and police forces so that it can, independently and as soon as possible, assume the responsibility for maintaining national security and social stability.

Secondly, it is necessary to accelerate economic and social reconstruction in Afghanistan so that development and dignity can be enjoyed by all

Afghans. The international community should make further efforts to assist the Afghan Government effectively to implement the Afghanistan Compact and the interim Afghan National Development Strategy so as to help it to achieve tangible progress on the economy, infrastructure, education, human rights and law and order.

The extensive growth in poppy cultivation and illicit trafficking poses a life-and-death challenge to the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan. We urge Afghanistan to strive to counter the drug threat and hope that it can cooperate closely with the United Nations, regional organizations and its neighbours to that end.

Thirdly, the international community should continue to provide unwavering support to the people and Government of Afghanistan in order to propel that country towards success. That is the common responsibility of the international community. We support an enhanced and more extensive role for the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in the peacebuilding effort in that country. We call on the international community to continue to provide multifaceted support and assistance to Afghanistan and to make every effort to implement tangible and beneficial projects for the Afghan people.

As a friendly neighbouring country of Afghanistan, China will, as always, make a constructive contribution to help Afghanistan to achieve peace, stability and economic and social development and to maintain regional peace and stability.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation thanks the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Oshima, for organizing the visiting mission of the Security Council to Afghanistan and for submitting his exhaustive report on its results. The conclusions contained in that document will serve as a good basis for the Council's further efforts to resolve the situation in Afghanistan.

I will briefly address the main points relating to the priorities of our future work in that regard.

We are seriously concerned by the negative trends emerging in the situation in that country. Afghanistan faces a significant number of challenges and threats. In dealing with the threats posed by the implacable extremists, the ongoing and uncompromising struggle against them and the strict implementation of the Council's sanctions regime against members of the Taliban and Al-Qaida are of particular importance. The generally complex situation is being exacerbated by the ever-increasing drug threat and its negative impact on the fight against terrorism and State administration reform. The dangerous link between illicit drug trafficking and the terrorist activities of the Taliban is growing.

In such circumstances, we must implement a range of measures to counter Afghan drug trafficking, including the creation and strengthening of existing security buffer zones in the context of international and regional cooperation. We must also implement a full spectrum of measures in the security sector, strengthening the ranks and effectiveness of the national army and the police, disarming illegal armed groups, addressing corruption and drug trafficking, and enhancing regional cooperation.

The Russian delegation is convinced that a stable settlement in Afghanistan is possible only on the basis of previously agreed arrangements, including the decisions of the Berlin conference of April 2004. That implies ensuring the participation of representatives of all political, ethnic and religious groups of Afghan society in the administrative institutions of the Afghan Government and requires the assistance of those neighbours of Afghanistan that can exercise a positive effect on the situation and in the restoration of the country. We feel that more active and collective international involvement in resolving the situation in Afghanistan will ensure the successful implementation of the recovery programme for Afghanistan set forth in the London Agreement. We believe that the United Nations will continue to play a key role in resolving the situation in Afghanistan and that under the aegis of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) there will be strict monitoring and coordination in the implementation of the Compact.

Russia continues to assist Afghanistan on a bilateral basis. We feel that our support, as part of the international effort, will help to turn Afghanistan into an independent and flourishing State that is free from the Taliban, terrorism and narcotics. We are ready to coordinate our efforts towards those goals with the Afghanistan Government and the international community.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First, I wish to join those who have already thanked Ambassador Oshima for the briefing to the Council this morning on the results of the lessons learned by the Security Council mission to Afghanistan. My delegation fully supports that assessment of the situation, as well as the recommendations, and would like to congratulate Ambassador Oshima for the manner in which he prepared and led the mission. My delegation also supports the statement to be made later by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

I wish to make a few additional comments on what my delegation believes should guide the future actions of the international community and in particular, those of the United Nations. Given the fear that the international community could disengage, it is crucial to reaffirm the long-term commitment of the international community to Afghanistan and the Security Council mission has contributed to that assurance.

Afghanistan is experiencing a difficult situation, even if the security situation appears to be stabilizing as winter approaches. The contribution of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the improvement must be recognized — Operation Medusa has strengthened its credibility — and it must continue to receive our full support. Beyond that, we must also strengthen our efforts to provide training and equipment for the Afghan security forces. France is strongly committed to those efforts through its military presence in Afghanistan.

The many difficult problems faced by Afghanistan cannot be resolved exclusively through military means. Our action must be part of a global strategy to strengthen the responsibility of the Afghan authorities and neighbouring countries and improve the daily living conditions of the population. Thus, it is important for the Afghan authorities and the international community to maintain their efforts. That is true first of all for the Afghan authorities. They must strive to achieve, within the timeframe, the objectives set forth in the Afghanistan Compact by placing particular priority on the following issues: improved governance and a firm fight against corruption, the disbandment of illegally armed groups — a necessary condition for long-term stability — and lastly, strengthening the fight against drug trafficking within the national strategy adopted by the Afghanistan Government. Efforts already under way concerning protection of human rights must also be continued.

At the same time, the international community must maintain its own efforts. The United Nations, through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), has a central and impartial role — namely, for coordination of the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. It alone has the necessary legitimacy and expertise to assume the role of coordinator in reconstruction efforts and promoting support to strengthen the State of Afghanistan. Therefore, we must give UNAMA the means to fully carry out its mission.

My delegation reiterates its wish that the presence of UNAMA be extended to new provinces, subject to security conditions. We also take the opportunity to pay tribute to the work of UNAMA and in particular, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs.

Lastly, the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan have a decisive role to play. Pakistan and Afghanistan must work hand in hand in order to fully control the borders between the two countries. The work of the Tripartite Commission, as well as the Jirga project on both sides of the border, are both positive developments. Those efforts must be part of an overall perspective to strengthen regional cooperation. We must therefore maintain our efforts to deal with the current difficulties and not endanger the significant progress that has been made since the Bonn process. France will play its full role in that effort.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have just heard the last speaker among the Council members. I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): At the outset I wish to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Voto-Bernales of Peru for the able manner in which he led the work of the Council during the month of November. We pay tribute to all of the members of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, for their recent visit under the leadership of Ambassador Kenzo Oshima. The visit presented another opportunity for the Council to review the ongoing efforts of my Government to achieve sustained progress in the areas of the security, social and economic development, good governance, human

rights and the rule of law — with the support of our international partners. Most importantly, it reaffirmed to our people the sustained focus and commitment of the international community to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. I am also thankful to other members of the Council — some of whom were also part of the mission to Afghanistan — Denmark, the United Kingdom, Peru, the United States, China, Russian Federation, France — for their proposals, which contained interesting points to be addressed by the Council.

We express our appreciation to the Council for having published — in a short period of time — a comprehensive report on the mission's activities during the course of its visit (S/2006/935). We also thank the Japanese delegation for its assistance in that matter. We fully support the recommendations presented in the report, which was the work, in large part, of Ambassador Oshima.

Much has changed in Afghanistan since the first visit of the Security Council mission in 2002. Together, we and the international community have succeeded in implementing milestones and benchmarks that were set out in the Bonn Agreement. The holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, progress towards the formation of a national army and police, the return of more than 5 million children to schools, including girls, and the adoption of a constitution that safeguards and guarantees equal rights between men and women — are but some of the many achievements that have taken place. Nevertheless, despite these achievements, we continue to face daunting challenges that affect the daily lives of our people. The prevailing security situation and the slow pace of development remain in the forefront of our challenges.

Terrorism constitutes the most significant threat to the security and prosperity of our people. Just two weeks ago, on 25 November, a suicide bomber of foreign origin walked into a restaurant in the south-eastern province of Paktika and carried out a suicide attack, brutally killing 15 civilians and injuring 12 others. Such attacks and other forms of terrorism, which occur particularly along the south and south-east border of the country, continue to be carried out in an organized manner.

These attacks take place despite the rigorous efforts of both the Afghan Government and the international community to provide security for our people. In this regard, we note with particular concer that cross-border terrorists and extremists operating i Afghanistan and in the region beyond receive incessan support in terms of financial, ideological and logistica assistance from sources located outside Afghanistan' borders.

In this context, allow me to refer briefly t paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report o 11 September 2006 (S/2006/727) in which he states,

> "The leadership relies heavily on cross-borde fighters, many of whom are Afghans drawn fro nearby refugee camps and radical seminaries i Pakistan ... They are trained and paid to serve a medium-level commanders, leading operation inside Afghanistan, and they are able to retrea back to safe havens outside the country."

Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly an the Security Council dealing with internationa terrorism, in particular Assembly resolution 49/60 o 1994, by which the Assembly adopted the Declaratio on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, an Council resolution 1373 (2001), oblige States to refra from organizing, assisting and perpetrating terrori attacks. The 1994 Declaration on the elimination o terrorism contains a specific provision that calls o States to ensure that their respective territories are no used for terrorist installations or training camps. I addition, resolution 1373 (2001) requires States t bring to justice any person who supports, facilitate participates or attempts to participate in the financin planning, preparation or perpetration of terrori attacks or provides safe havens.

We are of the view that the strict compliance b States with the aforementioned resolutions and text would contribute significantly to peace and stability i Afghanistan.

Afghanistan attaches great importance to the rol of regional cooperation in combating terrorism. A mor robust and comprehensive campaign against terrorism not only serves the interest of peace and stability i Afghanistan, but also benefits the security and stabilit of the region and beyond.

Based on a proposal made by President Karza we are preparing to convene a cross-border Jirga o security, consisting of influential tribal and religiou figures from both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakista border, with a view to enhancing local and triba

structures to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from Afghanistan and the region. We remain optimistic about the outcome of this initiative. High-level contacts aiming at developing cooperation in the elimination of terrorist acts are now being made and are very important for the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Additional progress in the strengthening of our security institutions is critical to improving the security situation in Afghanistan. Despite inadequate resources, the national army and police are engaged in challenging combat operations against remnants of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups in the southern and south-eastern provinces of the country. Our security forces continue to face significant challenges. Indeed, the lack of modern equipment and logistical support has had a drastic impact on the effectiveness of both the national army and the police. As my delegation indicated in previous statements, a significant improvement in the overall security situation will require the provision of additional resources to our security institutions.

We highlight the importance of the role of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in securing stability and security in Afghanistan. In that regard, the recent conclusion of the third phase of the nationwide expansion of ISAF is yet another important step forward. We also welcome the recent inclusion of ISAF in the Tripartite Commission.

Acceleration of social and economic development is indispensable to overall success in Afghanistan. While we have achieved much progress in many areas, we regret that the pace of reconstruction and development remains relatively slow. Here again, we highlight the need to initiate and implement major reconstruction projects and expedite the provision of basic services so that tangible and visible improvements in the daily lives of our people may be achieved.

We also reiterate the need for sustained international support for the implementation of the Compact and for our interim national development strategy. In this regard, we highlight the need to channel donor assistance through the Afghan national budget, while stressing the leadership role of the Afghan Government in designating development priorities.

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) continues to make progress in carrying out its important mandate. As noted in the report of the Security Council mission, the Board recently convened its third periodic meeting on 12 November. Moving beyond procedural matters, it has begun the process of reviewing progress made in key benchmarks scheduled to be completed very shortly.

Enhanced regional economic cooperation is vital for the timely and effective implementation of the Compact. We express the utmost appreciation to the Government of India for having co-hosted, with us, the Second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which was held in New Delhi on 18 and 19 November. We were pleased at the broad participation of representatives of neighbouring countries and other international partners. At the conclusion of the two-day meeting, participants reaffirmed the central importance of Afghanistan's development to the growth, stability and prosperity of the region.

The Government of Afghanistan attaches great importance to the fight against corruption and narcotics as key components of the Afghanistan Compact. The dangerous link between the production of narcotics and terrorism poses another threat to the stability and social development of Afghanistan. For its part, Afghanistan has embarked on a series of measures at the national, regional and international levels to combat the scourge of narcotics.

The updated Afghan National Drug Control Strategy, presented at the London Conference on Afghanistan, provides a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of that threat. We continue to make efforts to implement our Strategy. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the specialized counter-narcotics unit of the Afghan National Police seized approximately 66 tons of narcotics during the first half of 2006. Furthermore, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics has enhanced its coordination with the Counter-Narcotics Tribunal, the Counter-Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force and other relevant agencies.

Despite our efforts, we continue to face significant challenges in our fight against narcotics. We reiterate once again that a particular focus should be accorded to providing alternative crops to farmers as an essential element of a successful counter-narcotics

strategy. Equally important is the need for transit countries to exercise strengthened control over their borders to curb the flow of drugs, and for consuming countries to reduce demand in their markets and to fight against groups that are busy trafficking in those countries.

The fight against corruption is among our top priorities. Having already signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption, we remain committed to completing its ratification, perhaps very shortly. National legislation will be enacted to facilitate the implementation of the Convention by the end of 2007. In that regard, a mechanism will be established with a mandate to monitor and evaluate the process.

Furthermore, pursuant to the instructions of President Karzai, the Government has embarked upon a comprehensive initiative aimed at enhancing transparency and good governance in various Government institutions. As part of that initiative, the Government has established an anti-corruption commission — headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and composed of numerous agencies — to come up with additional recommendations for further action by the President.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my Government's steadfast commitment to overcome the remaining challenges in implementing the provisions of the Afghanistan Compact, with the support of our international partners. We also express our sincere appreciation to the international community for its ongoing support and assistance with regard to our efforts to achieve a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the representative of Finland.

Mrs. Schroderus-Fox (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The following countries — Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Ukraine and Moldova — align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union highly commends the timely mission to Afghanistan by the Security Council, under the able leadership of Ambassador Oshima. The mission is a clear sign of the continued commitment of the international community to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan. The European Union supports the findings of the mission.

Afghanistan has achieved significant progress in recent years. However, serious challenges, threatening to undermine the achievements to date, remain and in some cases have become more acute in the fields of security, drug production, governance and human rights, anti-corruption and economic development. Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, and urgent, coordinated steps must be taken by the Afghan Government and the international community to face up to those challenges. The military dimension of our efforts should go hand in hand with a strong, high-profile political engagement.

I would like to affirm the European Union's unwavering and long-term support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan. That engagement is based on the Afghanistan Compact and the Joint Political Declaration adopted by the European Union and the Government of Afghanistan on 16 November 2005.

The EU's assistance fosters the establishment of a democratic, accountable, sustainable and self-sufficient Afghan State capable of exercising its sovereignty and protecting the rights of its citizens. The European Union attaches special importance to the protection of human rights, paying special attention to the rights of women and children. The EU encourages the Government of Afghanistan to reinforce its commitment to human rights and reconciliation through increased support for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the implementation of the Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation in Afghanistan.

The fight against corruption and impunity remains a cross-cutting priority. We highlight the core importance of Afghan leadership and responsibility in that regard.

In the period 2002-2006, the European Union collectively contributed €3.7 billion in aid to Afghanistan, amounting to one third of the aid pledged by the international community. EU Member States have played leading coordinating roles in particular sectors and have made large contributions to security, including through the current provision of approximately half of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) — amounting to more than

16,000 troops — and through participation in provincial reconstruction teams.

The European Union places particular importance on the rule of law, and we are currently considering ways to increase our engagement in this sector. As the report points out, progress on the rule of law, including police and justice, at both the central and provincial levels is essential for the security and long-term stability of Afghanistan. The European Commission intends to increase its contributions for justice reform and local governance, inter alia, through provincial reconstruction teams led by, or with substantial assets from, EU member States.

We have also been actively supporting counter-narcotics efforts. Earlier this year, the EU adopted an action-oriented plan to combat the production of drugs in Afghanistan and their trafficking from that country along heroin routes. The National Drug Control Strategy represents an appropriate approach for tackling the problem, under the primary responsibility of the Afghan Government. Good governance and anti-corruption policies are essential components of counter-narcotics efforts.

The EU also encourages the development of regional cooperation through political dialogue, increased economic links and confidence-building measures between Afghanistan and its neighbours. We call on Afghanistan and Pakistan to deepen relations and to cooperate closely to deal with insecurity in border areas.

The European Union continues to support fully the Afghanistan Compact and considers it the central strategic framework for the future reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan until 2010. We expect strong Afghan leadership and responsibility in implementation of the Compact, we and encourage decisive steps from the Government of Afghanistan to fulfil its commitments under the Afghanistan Compact.

The international community, including the European Union, is fully committed to supporting this Afghan-led process. The bottom-up development strategies highlighted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Tom Koenigs, could provide a valuable contribution for reconstruction and stabilization. The impact of international assistance should be further enhanced through efficient coordination and monitoring.

The United Nations, mainly through UNAMA, continues to have a key role in coordination and monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, including chairing the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). The EU will, together with UNAMA, NATO and other key actors, including the international financial institutions, work towards effective cooperation and coordination within the international community and with the Government of Afghanistan.

The EU highly appreciates the work of UNAMA and of Special Representative Koenigs in this respect and welcomes the initiative of holding a JCMB meeting of member States at the senior official level in Berlin on the first anniversary of the Afghanistan Compact.

The EU welcomes plans to expand UNAMA's presence throughout the field, security permitting. We also emphasize close collaboration between the United Nations Special Representative, the EU Special Representative and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative.

The European Union will continue to work, on the basis of the Afghanistan Compact, in close collaboration with the Afghan Government and our international partners, to build an Afghanistan whose prosperity and stability matches the hopes, the strength and the fortitude of its people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Sen (India): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

This discussion is timely, coming as it does in the midst of heightened international focus on Afghanistan and the surrounding region. Any discussion on Afghanistan must begin from the central premise that the international community has an abiding responsibility to assist Afghanistan in consolidating democratic governance, peace, stability and long-term employment-led development, while delivering humanitarian assistance in the interim. Our views are set forth in that context.

We have carefully read the report of the Security Council mission and the earlier report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan. We share the mission's positive assessment of the achievements of

the Government of President Karzai and the people of Afghanistan over the past five years. The establishment of genuinely democratically elected representative institutions and sustained economic growth, as well as growing trade and economic cooperation, investment in core infrastructure projects and the implementation of education, health and rural development programmes, are praiseworthy, particularly as they were achieved in the face of adversity. At the same time, the support of the international community has been substantial and fairly consistent. India is happy to continue playing a role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, given our historic ties with the Afghan people.

There is no doubt that the most pressing task before us is to overcome the challenge of insecurity. We have heard several arguments suggesting that the lack of effective governance in Afghanistan, widespread corruption, the inefficiency of the police service, the growing narcotics trade and continued warlordism in the provinces all contribute to the security problem. That may well be true, but to focus on those as the cause of the security problems is, in our judgement, to miss the point. Those are factors which thrive on insecurity and serve to exacerbate it. They are not causes of insecurity. Instead, it is the revival of the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, and the existence of cross-border safe havens for such groups, that are the real cause of insecurity. In focusing on rebuilding and strengthening Afghan State institutions, the roots of insecurity should not be forgotten.

The report (S/2005/935) refers to Operation Medusa. As we know, a greater number of people than the number of those killed in Operation Medusa became active again. Therefore, Operation Medusa has not even contained, let alone eliminated, Medusa herself; the snakes are still swirling because of the cross-border dimension. That reinforces the importance of this aspect, and historical experience shows that unless it is addressed, attempts at stability or security will be unavailing. It is therefore important to confront, rather than to strike deals with, the Taliban, which is really tantamount — if I may continue to use the metaphor — to looking at the image of Medusa in the shield without striking at Medusa herself.

While the report of the Council mission suggests that insurgency is largely confined to one third of Afghanistan, the situation remains precarious. The statistics of the International Security Assistance Force itself show that in recent months security incidents have escalated by as much as 70 per cent and 50 per cent in Paktika and Khost provinces. Therefore, it is not clear that efforts to negotiate peace in the more troubled Afghan provinces are succeeding; indeed, terrorist violence spreading elsewhere may suggest the opposite. Moreover, the growing incidence of suicide bombings shows the increasing spread of an ideology and tactics typical of Al-Qaida, which are not part of the Afghan cultural and religious tradition.

Therefore, we believe that the cost of tolerating the spiralling violence is infinitely higher than any costs we might bear in quelling it through firm law enforcement action. The consequences of collective inaction may well be borne by the international community in general, but will certainly be borne by the States of the region in particular.

It is in this context that India emphasizes the need to simultaneously implement firm and effective law enforcement measures, security sector reform programmes, capacity-building measures and regional cooperation in all fields. Similarly, the growth of representative political parties and the broad-basing of the culture of democratic political activism, which is already under way, are developments that should be fostered, since they also greatly help in checking terrorism. All of these contribute to the effort to create credible and sustained opportunities to build upon the growing constituency for peace in Afghanistan and across the region. Nevertheless, they must be accompanied by firm measures to enforce peace.

It was fortuitous that the Security Council mission visited our region a few days prior to the second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which India had the honour to host, jointly with our Afghan brothers, in New Delhi last month. The regional dimension is explicitly recognized in the report of the mission, in context of finding ways to help Afghanistan overcome the challenges before it.

Indeed, the New Delhi Declaration of the Second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan notes that a

> "strategy for development for Afghanistan which is based on cooperation with regional countries creates significant possibilities for reducing poverty and for achieving the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks and Millennium Development Goals in the entire region".

Towards this end, it outlines a number of useful suggestions for the countries of the region to coordinate policies for exploiting shared resources like water, agriculture and energy, to develop capacity-building programmes, and to expand trade and transport linkages, in order to design and build appropriate regional projects.

Similarly, we believe that more work needs to be done to reverse the expansion of narcotics production. Not only is it necessary to implement policies to stop cultivation, but it is also important to focus on simultaneously implementing crop substitution programmes and improving border management mechanisms. It will take a coordinated effort by the Government and people of Afghanistan, as well as by regional players, to effectively address this particular challenge.

India's support for a sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan is consistent and well known. We see a resurgent, stable, sovereign and peaceful Afghanistan as an essential element in the emerging mosaic of regional cooperation underpinning our world. It is also part of a process that reclaims for the people of Afghanistan their rightful place in our collective future. Afghanistan's entry into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, at its last Summit in Dhaka, was a manifestation of this. We believe that Afghanistan can and must be provided with the means to re-establish itself as the crossroads of Asia, and as one of the future transport hubs and energy bridges of our region.

In conclusion, let me also reiterate our firm commitment to our partnership with Afghanistan, which today covers a multidimensional cooperation programme that harmonizes with the priorities of the Afghan Government. Not only have we extended financial assistance, in excess of $650 million, to fund infrastructure projects and to assist with the national budget process, we are also expanding our involvement in the capacity-building process, both through traditional training programmes and through innovative public-private partnerships that involve our apex Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Thus, our assistance spans the range of activity, from basic infrastructure such as roads, power, dams and telecom to rapidly implemented, community-based, small-scale projects, and training and capacity-building programmes. To summarize our approach, we seek to help Afghanistan create the infrastructure of a modern State while, at the same time, going beyond monetary assistance to provide the Afghan people the wherewithal to help themselves.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): The success of the United Nations-supported mission in Afghanistan in providing security, governance and development is vital to the Afghan people, but is also vital to the health and future of the United Nations, as the Prime Minister of Canada declared in the General Assembly in September.

Canada welcomes the recent mission undertaken by the Security Council to Afghanistan, which demonstrated a collective commitment to review gains made to date and to identify outstanding obstacles. I, too, would like to thank Ambassador Oshima for leading this mission so ably, and to thank Japan for maintaining focus on Afghanistan in the Council. Canada hopes and expects this level of consistent engagement by the Council on Afghanistan to continue in the months ahead.

The mission's report (S/2006/935), combined with the Secretary-General's report of 11 September and the biannual progress report of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), provide frank and comprehensive assessments of the current situation. Taken together, they provide all of us with concrete recommendations to guide our ongoing efforts.

There has been important progress in Afghanistan in 2006. Notably, the Bonn process drew to a close this past January, and the Afghanistan Compact was launched by the Afghan Government and the international community. Across Afghanistan, governance institutions are emerging, including the Parliament, the Supreme Court and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Development and reconstruction are occurring, although perhaps at a slower pace than we would all hope. Significant challenges, nevertheless, continue to confront Afghanistan.

Indeed, Canada's commitment to Afghanistan has been steadfast, and we have deployed our soldiers where they are needed most. It is clear that they are now needed in the south, where insurgents are trying to hold ordinary Afghans hostage by preventing them from receiving the most basic of services from their

elected Government — health, education and the rule of law. We encourage all Member States to consider how they can contribute to meeting Afghan needs in the south.

Canada is committed to improving the lives of Afghans. As part of our approach, we have committed nearly $1 billion in development assistance from 2001 to 2010. Alongside the Afghan Government, the United Nations, NATO and our other international partners, we are striving to help establish a stable, democratic and self-sufficient Afghanistan. At its core, this is all about restoring normalcy to the Afghan people: girls and boys attending school, women starting small businesses, refugees returning home and citizens feeling free enough to express their views.

The Afghanistan Compact objectives are Canada's objectives. They will only be successfully achieved, however, through concerted international partnership, building the confidence of the Afghan people and the Afghan Government's leadership.

The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) is the primary international institution responsible for stewardship of the Compact, alongside the Afghan Government. UNAMA has a crucial role to play in strengthening the emerging governance institutions of the Afghan State, including through capacity-building. Canada encourages UNAMA to enhance its role on the ground in Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of governance, human rights and the rule of law. This will involve additional resources in Kabul as well as in the regional offices across Afghanistan, including in Kandahar. Canada will continue to support UNAMA through the secondment of police and corrections advisors, and hopes that others will make similar commitments.

Canada, therefore, supports the Mission's recommendation that the Secretary-General consider measures to promote UNAMA's coordinating role both in Kabul and at the provincial and local levels, and welcomes the ongoing expansion of UNAMA into the provinces.

Afghanistan's neighbours also have a central role to play. Instability does not respect borders and poverty is infectious. High-level regional engagement and cooperation are critical to stemming the trafficking in narcotics, finding sustainable solutions for Afghan refugees and addressing transnational terrorism, including the cross-border movement of insurgents. In this regard, we welcome the commitment of both Afghanistan and Pakistan to a meaningful and constructive cross-border dialogue. We are also hopeful that initial discussions, in the context of this recent mission, with the Government of Pakistan can lead to concrete improvements.

Canada strongly shares the concern expressed by the mission regarding the humanitarian implications of the use of landmines along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The people of Afghanistan must have faith in their institutions of Government in order to have faith in their future. Neither they nor we can tolerate corruption within the ranks of Afghanistan's national, provincial or local institutions. We welcome the Afghan Government's commitment to fighting corruption, as expressed by the Ambassador here today. The Afghan people are entitled to an effective, accountable and transparent Government.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada strongly supports the Council's recommendation that collective efforts be redoubled to build an effective Afghan National Police that can operate with the confidence of the people throughout the country. Policing is a priority area for Canada in Afghanistan. Through our civilian police contingent in our Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar, we are providing training and mentorship to Afghan police.

We also hope that any auxiliary police forces deployed to southern Afghanistan will be properly vetted, trained and equipped, and will be fully accountable and operating under central authority.

Canada welcomes the emphasis in the Security Council mission report on human rights, including especially women's rights and the protection of civilians. Canada has strongly supported the development of the Action Plan for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation and looks forward to its formal launch on 10 December on the occasion of International Human Rights Day by the Government of Afghanistan. Ultimately, the Afghan Government's capacity to provide basic services and ensure good governance is critical to our collective success. We will continue to support and expect strong Afghan leadership with respect to the critical challenges confronting Afghanistan. This includes visible and unequivocal

action in the combat against corruption and for the disbandment of illegal armed groups, among other things. We would also welcome continued efforts to extend Afghan national programmes to southern Afghanistan and to other areas where the need is ever more pressing.

It is in the interest of every country represented in this Chamber to help the Afghan people in their time of need. Afghans are counting on the United Nations and its Member States to make good on our collective commitments, as reflected in the Afghanistan Compact. We commend the Security Council for its decision to undertake this important mission in Afghanistan and call on it to keep this issue high on its agenda in the months to come.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the members of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Raymond Johansen, and invite him to take the floor.

Mr. Johansen (Norway): Norway welcomes the Security Council's second mission to Afghanistan. The mission was indeed a timely one, as the situation in the country is still cause for grave concern. The report contains important recommendations. I would like to commend Ambassador Oshima and other members of the delegation for the initiative to map the terrain at this crucial moment. Let me initially also commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Koenigs and his United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) team for their efforts and dedication in spite of difficult circumstances.

Norway supports the views expressed by the European Union (EU) and appreciates the constructive role of, and the close cooperation with, EU Special Representative Vendrell.

As it stated during the recent deliberations of the General Assembly on Afghanistan, Norway believes that the situation calls for a broad and comprehensive strategy. Three challenges are facing us: first, a need for improved coordination of international assistance; secondly, a need for capacity-building within Government institutions, the police, the judiciary and the army; and, thirdly, more concerted efforts to support the Afghan Government's outreach beyond the capital and to help it improve its own institutions. These challenges are closely interlinked. Norway stands ready to contribute to developing and implementing a strategy that addresses these issues.

In 2007, Norway intends to increase its financial assistance to Afghanistan to at least 450 million Norwegian krone, or approximately $72 million. That is an increase of more than $16 million. We will continue to contribute in accordance with national priorities and the Afghanistan Compact and to channel substantial resources to the Afghan budget through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). A key to success would be rapid progress on the development of the Afghan National Development Strategy. The plan should be focused and uncomplicated. It is crucial that it be developed on the basis of consultations that are truly national.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) continues to play a key role in providing security. Norway is committed to continuing its participation in that respect.

Turning to the mission report, Norway would particularly emphasize the importance of enhancing the coordinating role of UNAMA. Norway is currently looking at ways to assist UNAMA in strengthening its capacity in the area of humanitarian coordination, both in Kabul and in the field. It is imperative that UNAMA be present in the provinces. Civil-military coordination should be strengthened, while a clear division of roles and tasks should be maintained. Humanitarian assistance must be based on humanitarian principles. Norway strongly supports the mission's appeal to the Secretary-General to make specific recommendations on how to promote UNAMA's coordinating role.

Norway agrees that it is important to strengthen the Afghan National Police. Norway will increase its efforts to achieve that goal and is looking forward to continuing its close cooperation with Afghan authorities, the EU and other stakeholders. UNAMA has an important role to play in that arena as well, not least in assisting the Afghan authorities in speeding up reforms. Reform within the Ministry of Interior is vital. In particular, I would like to point out the importance of improving procedures for appointments and respecting them.

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), of which Norway is now a member, has a significant role to play. Norway welcomes its recent report, which contained a balanced description of challenges and achievements. We welcome the

proposal to hold a meeting of the JCMB with senior officials. Further strengthening of headquarters coordination is required. The Norwegian proposal to appoint a special envoy is aimed at strengthening the dialogue between capitals and international organizations, in support of the Afghan Government and UNAMA.

Norway also welcomes recent efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. A political dialogue and facilitation of economic cooperation within the region would be helpful in endeavours to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan.

The Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan should be encouraged to continue their cooperation on security matters in the border areas. The involvement of local leaders in this dialogue will, hopefully, prove to be useful in that respect.

Finally, Norway would like to stress the importance of making the empowerment of women a cross-cutting priority, in line with the recommendations of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Women's rights and women's needs should be given particular attention in Afghanistan as well.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the Council's presidency for this month. I am confident that you will lead the Council with your well-known wisdom and ability. I also extend my appreciation to your predecessor.

Allow me also to thank Ambassador Oshima for his informative briefing on the recent mission to Afghanistan. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and to his Special Representative, Mr. Tom Koenigs, as well as to their colleagues in UNAMA, for their tireless efforts and dedication. We continue to underline the central role of the United Nations.

The recent Security Council mission visited Afghanistan at a crucial juncture, at a time when, on the one hand, the Afghan people have many reasons to be satisfied with their accomplishments, while, on the other, a number of grave challenges have tempered their legitimate hopes with signs of disillusionment.

It is indeed imperative to emphasize in words and in deeds the continued commitment of the international community to support the Government and people of Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Compact, under Afghan ownership and leadership, which remains the central and strategic framework for cooperation between the Afghan Government and the international community.

As rightly mentioned in the reports of the mission and of the Secretary-General, in the past several years, Afghans have undertaken significant efforts, with the support of the international community, towards the development and stability of Afghanistan. These achievements are grounds for hope and optimism. As these reports indicate, the major achievements of the Afghans in the past several years include the establishment of democratic institutions, economic growth, per capita income increase, trade and investment expansion — principally with regional partners, including Iran — significant infrastructure projects, and successful national programmes in the fields of education, health and rural development, along with the development of new Afghan security institutions.

However, it is unfortunate that, despite all these positive and encouraging developments, the Afghan people are still facing grave and daunting challenges in their endeavours towards stability, security and development. The security situation, as mentioned in the reports, has, in general, remained precarious throughout the country, with the increasing threat of suicide attacks and other forms of terrorism, posed mostly by the Taliban and Al-Qaida. We agree with the finding of the mission that the spread of insurgent and terrorist activity by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, linked with the illegal drug trade and coupled with other menaces such as corruption, collectively disrupt rehabilitation and reconstruction work in Afghanistan, thus posing a grave threat to reconstruction and nation-building.

We strongly condemn the terrorist acts perpetrated in Afghanistan and remain steadfast in our unwavering support for the Afghan people and Government in their efforts to achieve development and security.

In the meantime, we believe that in combating terrorism and insecurity in Afghanistan, any action, including contacts and talks with terrorists who are responsible for insecurity and mayhem, that could be

wrongly interpreted as rewarding terrorists and criminals should be avoided.

We support the report's conclusion that establishing a strong and sustainable Afghan National Army is of vital importance in effectively addressing the surge in terrorist activities and violence in certain parts of Afghanistan. In this regard, it is imperative to redouble the efforts to establish a trusted and effective Afghan National Police throughout the country and to address the inadequate and belated efforts to develop the Afghan National Army.

As a neighbouring country, the Islamic Republic of Iran is extremely concerned over the increase in poppy cultivation and opium production in Afghanistan, which according to various findings has increased from 180 tons in 2001 to 6,100 tons this year, representing more than 60 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. We concur with the mission's interlocutors, who have identified Afghanistan's flourishing narco-economy as a primary threat to the stability of the country and as a cancer that is fast becoming the number one problem in Afghanistan and the wider region.

To effectively address this menace, greater efforts and resolute actions on the part of both Afghanistan and the wider international community are unquestionably needed. We share the view that a more robust campaign against drug traffickers, the elimination of illicit poppy cultivation, demand reduction, crop substitution, the strengthening of law enforcement, promoting and diversifying lawful livelihoods and stepping up Government activities to arrest and prosecute major drug traffickers, regardless of their position or status, and proceeding with the energetic implementation of all elements of the National Drug Control Strategy are vital and indispensable if this menace is to be contained, let alone eradicated.

For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran has fought a costly war against heavily armed drug traffickers and is resolute in its continued fight against that menace. Meanwhile, for Iran to sustain its ongoing fight against drug trafficking, international support, especially the cooperation of neighbouring countries, is essential.

Given the importance of regional cooperation to help the Afghans cope with growing insecurity, we look with hope to a number of positive steps taken in the past several months with a view to enhancing cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in more rigorously addressing the insecurity and terrorist threats in the south, south-east and east of Afghanistan. In this context, my Government has always been at the forefront of efforts to support a regional dialogue to combat terrorism, extremism and traffic in drugs. We have also actively promoted regional cooperation for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, as well as cooperation on refugee issues.

We continue to have an enormous stake in the success of the Afghan people and thus have extended our unreserved cooperation to them and their representatives throughout the process. Of $560 million worth of reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan pledged by Iran at the Tokyo Conference — which is the highest pledge in terms of per capita income of donor countries — we have thus far spent $270 million on mutually agreed projects in the areas of infrastructure, technical and educational services and financial and in-kind assistance.

During his latest visit to Iran last May, President Karzai, heading nine cabinet ministers and several provincial governors, conferred with Iranian authorities and discussed the expansion of relations in areas of mutual interest. During the visit, seven agreements and memorandums of understanding on exchange of prisoners, extradition of criminals, promotion of investment and construction of the Khwaf-Herat railway, as well as cooperation in cultural, judicial and economic fields, were signed.

The people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have warmly hosted 3 million Afghan refugees for about three decades, incurring huge costs in the process. Now that Afghanistan has entered a new phase of its history, we expect more cooperation on the part of the international community and the Afghan Government in the process of voluntary repatriation of refugees. Despite the commendable actions taken in the past several years, progress has yet to reach a satisfactory level. We had expected the Security Council mission to address the important issue of refugees and their return in a more serious manner during its visit and in its report.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, on behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month. It is a special pleasure to see the

fraternal State of Qatar and you, my dear friend, preside over the Council at this important juncture.

Let me also express our appreciation to Ambassador Voto-Bernales of Peru for his successful presidency in November.

The visit of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan last month was timely. We congratulate Ambassador Oshima for the presentation of a factual and objective report on its findings. The overview contained in the report of the mission is similar to the assessment that was presented in the report of the Secretary-General in September (S/2006/727).

It is a euphemism to say that the security environment is precarious. Certainly, it is dangerous, but we must understand the reasons for that environment comprehensively and honestly. In the view of Pakistan, the deterioration in the security environment in Afghanistan is the result of three major failures.

First is the failure of governance. We have rampant corruption and misgovernance both at the centre and in the provinces. We have a drug-based economy — 60 per cent of the gross domestic product, according to Afghanistan's own figures. We have a much-publicized failure of security sector reform in the police as well as in the national army.

The second failure is the failure of reconstruction. There has been some development in the northern parts of Afghanistan, but there has been virtually no development in the South and the South-East of Afghanistan, which is largely terra incognita for the Kabul Government. That is where there are large sanctuaries for the militancy that today threatens Afghanistan and Pakistan. Large tracts of land are out of the control of both the Kabul Government and the Coalition forces. There, the Islamic militants rule, certainly by night and often by day. We must bring reconstruction if the Afghan people and the people of that region are to have a stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The third failure is the failure of reconciliation. Large sections of the Afghan people, particularly the Pashtuns, have been left out of the power structure, both at the centre and in the provinces. Warlords rule and fight against each other, and people have complete insecurity. They therefore turn to anyone who can provide that security for them.

Pakistan has a vital stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan. The 25 years of war in Afghanistan have destabilized and radicalized our frontier regions and alienated some of the Pashtuns because of what is happening in Afghanistan. Pakistan therefore desires peace and stability in Afghanistan. If we are to serve the larger objective of serving as a bridge between Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia, we need peace in Afghanistan. Above all, however, Pakistan's support for Afghanistan and our cooperation with Afghanistan are dictated by the natural affiliation between our peoples of history, of faith, of ethnicity and of common suffering during difficult years.

We are therefore pained to hear insinuations and allegations such as those which were expressed today by my brother from Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan is today in Kabul discussing ways and means by which we can cooperate with and help Afghanistan. But help is based on mutual trust, and when we hear our Afghan brothers mouth allegations which are either untrue or grossly exaggerated, we question the motives. We ask ourselves why they seek to explain their own failure by pointing fingers across the border. We wonder whether they are acting on their own behalf or whether they are acting as a puppet of those who desire to erode relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the brotherly peoples of the two countries. People speak about medusas, but believe in Kali, the goddess of war. We ask our Afghan brothers to refrain from such exaggerations and allegations if they desire our cooperation.

The Taliban are an Afghan phenomenon. My brother has quoted from the report of the Secretary-General; let me also refer to that report. The Secretary-General's report rightly notes that the insurgency in Afghanistan is being conducted by "Afghans operating inside Afghanistan's borders" (*S/2006/727, para. 5*). The report also identifies five distinct leadership centres of the insurgency, all located within Afghanistan. According to the report, "[t]he foot soldiers of the insurgency are Afghans recruited within Afghanistan" (*ibid., para. 9*). We therefore reject insinuations of Pakistan's providing sanctuaries or of any training and recruitment in Pakistan. Certainly, we would ask such friends as Denmark to come and check before they repeat such allegations.

There are, of course, some elements of the Taliban and their sympathizers who crossed over into Pakistan following the post-9/11 military intervention

by the United States and Coalition forces in Afghanistan. Those Taliban and militants from Al-Qaida melded into the 3 million Afghan refugees who have been hosted for the past 25 years by Pakistan.

Pakistan is helping Afghanistan in the security sector, including through the Tripartite Commission. The United States, the International Security Assistance Force, NATO and even Afghan officials are aware of the nature and the extent of Pakistan's support. Pakistan believes that the Taliban are a common threat to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their vision is contrary to the vision of modernism which we are seeking to promote in our country. But the Taliban are Afghans, operating in large areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan. Those operations could not take place unless the local population were sympathetic to the Taliban and the militants who operate with impunity in those large tracts of Afghanistan. Pakistan, for its part, has made every effort to prevent illegal border crossing. We have deployed 80,000 troops – more than the total of Coalition and Afghan forces on the other side. We have lost 600 of our personnel, who have been killed in the 80 operations we have conducted. Thus, there can be no doubt about the sincerity and commitment of Pakistan to bring security to the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. But that responsibility must be joint.

We do not accept that the onus is only on Pakistan. We have 700 posts along the border with Afghanistan and 80,000 troops. There is only a fraction of that number on the other side. In the North Waziristan area, we have 97 posts, while NATO-ISAF has three and the Afghan army 21. We therefore ask for a matching effort to control the long and difficult border. One should refrain from making allegations against Pakistan and seeking to transfer blame to Pakistan.

I would add that the international community has avoided seriously addressing the problem of the Afghan refugees. There are 3 million refugees still in Pakistan. Without any appreciable international assistance, we support them, on our own. They constitute one tenth of the total population of Afghanistan. Many of the complaints regarding illegal border crossings would end, if we could return the refugees to Afghanistan.

We have proposed that the Afghan refugee camps on the border be relocated to the Afghan side. We are planning to return all refugees to Afghanistan within three years. That should put an end to the allegations of cross-border movement.

But it is surprising that the refugee issue does not figure in the report of the Security Council mission. We wonder, and would ask Ambassador Oshima, whether the issue raised by the Kabul side. It is certain that it was raised by the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, when he was consulted in Islamabad by Ambassador Oshima. But that issue is totally ignored. We have said that in order to prevent cross-border movement, we want to fence the border — at least selectively. That was not accepted by our partners. We proposed, more drastically, to mine the border, but that is opposed on humanitarian grounds, as we just heard from Canada.

People speak loosely about the agreement we concluded in the North Waziristan area of our frontier. We did so in order to calm the area and to prevent cross-border action by militants. We made an agreement with the tribal elders and not with the Taliban. The result is that there is calm in North Waziristan today and that can be independently established. The incidents of violence in Afghanistan have declined since September. That can be confirmed by the statistics from NATO and ISAF.

The fighting currently taking place in Afghanistan is mostly in Helmand Province, which is quite a distance from the border. There too, United Kingdom forces reached a similar agreement with tribal leaders in the Musa Qala area, which has calmed the situation there. Pakistan intends to convene tribal jirgas in other parts of our frontier region to conclude peace and development agreements that are similar to that in North Waziristan. Jirgas in the tribal areas of Pakistan and across the border in southern and eastern Afghanistan are a time-honoured local tradition. It is a process aimed at promoting consensus and reconciliation by involving credible intermediaries and tribal elders.

We believe that such agreements could be replicated on the Afghan side to strengthen the tribal and traditional leadership structures, end political alienation, cease hostilities, bring about normalcy and promote reconstruction and development. That approach was endorsed at the summit meeting between President Musharraf, President Karzai and President

Bush in September 2006, in Washington, D.C. Foreign Minister Kasuri is visiting Kabul today for further discussion on the modalities of the jirgas.

Pakistan will continue to provide its cooperation and support to Afghanistan. But the problems of Afghanistan need to be addressed through a holistic approach based on political reconciliation, improved security and governance and rapid and large-scale economic and social development and reconstruction.

On its own, Afghanistan cannot achieve those goals. It needs the support of the international community. Despite its limited resources and its own problems, Pakistan has committed $250 million for reconstruction in Afghanistan. We have spent over half of that amount and 60,000 Pakistanis are in Afghanistan helping in the reconstruction.

As Ambassador Oshima appropriately warned in his briefing, it is abundantly clear that Afghanistan needs additional and sustained support and assistance from the international community. Without such support, there is no guarantee that Afghanistan will not slide backwards into conflict and become a failed State once again.

We believe it is necessary to win the hearts and minds of the people through a political and economic approach. Military means, often necessary, cannot deliver in and of themselves. In that perspective, President Musharraf has proposed the implementation of a Marshall Plan-like programme of $4 to $5 billion in south and south east Afghanistan. That amount is only a fraction of what is spent on military operations in Afghanistan. The international community should seriously consider that proposal, which, under the prevailing circumstances, could provide a realistic chance of bringing durable peace and development to Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to note that there will be consultations of the whole after this meeting on the situation in the Middle East and Lebanon, immediately after the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

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Security Council

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Official communiqué of the 5582nd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 8 December 2006, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 8 December 2006, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 5582nd meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Major General Rafael José Barni, Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

"Members of the Council, Major General Barni and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

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